THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

REPORT ON THE BUDGET 2008 CONSULTATIONS

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES

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2008-02684/

November 15, 2007

To the Honourable
Legislative Assembly of the
Province of British Columbia

Honourable Members:

I have the honour to present herewith the First Report of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services for the third session of the 38th Parliament.

The First Report covers the work of the Committee on the Budget 2008 Consultation Process.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

WL Bennett

Bill Bennett, MLA
Chair

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Bill Bennett, MLA	Chair	East Kootenay
Bruce Ralston, MLA	Deputy Chair	Surrey-Whalley
Iain Black, MLA		Port Moody-Westwood
Harry Bloy, MLA		Burquitlam
Randy Hawes, MLA		Maple Ridge-Mission
Dave S. Hayer, MLA		Surrey-Tynehead
John Horgan, MLA		Malahat-Juan de Fuca
Jenny Wai Ching Kwan, MLA		Vancouver-Mount Pleasant
Richard T. Lee, MLA		Burnaby North
Bob Simpson, MLA		Cariboo North

CLERKS TO THE COMMITTEE

Craig James, Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees

Leslie Gönye, Clerk Assistant (Committees), Parliament of New South Wales, Australia

Katch Koch, Committee Clerk, Legislative Assembly of Ontario

COMMITTEE RESEARCHERS

Jonathan Fershau, Committee Research Analyst

Naomi Adams, Committee Researcher

Erin Bett, Committee Researcher

Lindsay Gardner, Committee Researcher

Jeremy Wood, Committee Researcher

TERMS OF REFERENCE

On April 19, 2007, the Legislative Assembly agreed that the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services be empowered:

to examine, inquire into and make recommendations with respect to the pre-budget consultation report prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with section 2 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* and, in particular, to:

a. Conduct public consultations across British Columbia on proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget and fiscal policy for the coming fiscal year by any means the Committee considers appropriate, including but not limited to public meetings, telephone and electronic means;

b. Prepare a report no later than November 15, 2007 on the results of those consultations.

In addition to the powers previously conferred upon the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, the Committee shall be empowered:

a. to appoint of their number, one or more subcommittees and to refer to such subcommittees any of the matters referred to the Committee;

b. to sit during a period in which the House is adjourned, during the recess after prorogation until the next following Session and during any sitting of the House;

c. to adjourn from place to place as may be convenient; and

d. to retain personnel as required to assist the Committee,

and shall report to the House as soon as possible, or following any adjournment, or at the next following Session, as the case may be; to deposit the original of its reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly during a period of adjournment and upon resumption of the sittings of the House, the Chair shall present all reports to the Legislative Assembly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the 5,800-plus British Columbians who took part in this year's process. The ongoing public interest in the budgetary process is unprecedented, not only in Canada, but likely throughout the entire Commonwealth. The ideas and suggestions we read and heard play a vital role in shaping our response to the Minister of Finance's budget consultation process.

The Committee is supported in its task by the dedicated staff of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia — in particular, the Office of the Clerk of Committees and Hansard Services. We would like to acknowledge their important contributions to this process — both at our public hearings throughout the province and working behind the scenes in Victoria.

We would also like to thank Katch Koch, Committee Clerk with the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Leslie Gönye, Clerk Assistant (Committees) with the Parliament of New South Wales, Australia. Messrs. Koch and Gönye provided procedural advice to the Committee during our public hearings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 19, 2007, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia approved a motion instructing the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services to conduct public consultations on the *Budget 2008 Consultation Paper.* The Committee's terms of reference specified that the Finance Committee was to receive proposals and recommendations regarding the provincial budget for the upcoming fiscal year and to make its report public no later than November 15, 2007.

On September 4, 2007, the Committee announced the locations of 13 public hearings across British Columbia. Due to strong demand, the Victoria public hearing was extended in length; a public hearing was added in Abbotsford; and the submission deadline was extended by one week (from October 19 to October 26, 2007). The Committee also accepted and reviewed written submissions, on-line responses to the budget consultation questionnaire, and responses returned using the budget consultation flyer. In total, more than 5,800 British Columbians participated in this year's budget consultation process.

This year, the Committee's report addresses the three themes contained in the budget consultation paper: meeting B.C.'s climate change goals, sustaining health care for future generations, and reviewing additional housing initiatives for British Columbians. It also contains several suggestions we heard on British Columbians' other budgetary priorities.

Having identified the budgetary choices British Columbians are prepared to make to reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gases by at least 33 percent by 2020, the Committee makes five recommendations. We emphasise that government, must maintain a growing economy and pay down the provincial debt regardless of any policy shifts to address climate change. Furthermore we believe that the government should take decisive action on climate change by providing clear and concise information on programs and measures available to individuals and businesses to change behaviours; continue to address a broad range of environmental and conservation issues; and expedite the construction of rapid transit.

With respect to encouraging environmentally responsible choices, we recommend that the government consider incentives to promote energy-efficient households; support for British Columbia's agricultural industry and local food production; provide incentives to support B.C.'s growing biofuels industry; support the trucking industry's green transition; and review measures to promote environmentally-friendly packaging for consumer goods.

We heard a strong message for the government to recognize that there is a clear urban/rural divide with respect to transportation-related taxation. The Committee also believes that new taxation to discourage activities that create greenhouse gases should be a second choice to positive, incentive-based programs. We recommend that the government participate in a carbon trading system that benefits B.C. businesses and taxpayers. However, acknowledging the potential for government to implement a carbon tax, we also recommend that the government mitigate the impacts of such as tax on lower- and middle-income families.

The Committee was surprised by how few suggestions the public made on how to make our health care system sustainable for future generations. However, we do make several recommendations such as expanding the role for ActNow BC; proposing a new fitness tax credit; increasing tobacco taxes; and encouraging the government to consider using tax policy to encourage a shift in sales to beverages with lower alcohol content.

With respect to housing options for British Columbians, the Committee makes several suggestions including: raising the threshold for first-time home buyers under the property transfer tax, and continuing to take steps to promote the development of affordable housing.

The Committee also puts forward recommendations on a variety of other budget priorities raised by British Columbians: arts funding; child care spaces; transportation infrastructure; post-secondary education; and the need for increased immigration to address looming labour shortages; taxation levels and restorative justice programs.

THE BUDGET 2008 CONSULTATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

On April 19, 2007, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia approved a motion instructing the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services (the Finance Committee/the Committee) to conduct public consultations across British Columbia, and to make recommendations with respect to the budget consultation paper prepared by the Minister of Finance in accordance with sections 2 and 3 of the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*.

This year marks the eighth consecutive year in which the all-party Finance Committee has conducted province-wide consultations on the province's budget and fiscal priorities.

The Committee held 14 public hearings attended by 222 witnesses; received 477 written submissions; and reviewed 3,863 on-line and 1,241 flyer responses. The Committee is committed to providing all British Columbians — whether they represent a non-profit organization, a private business, or themselves as individuals — the opportunity to be heard.

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

This year, the Committee held an organizational meeting on May 29, 2007. Bill Bennett, MLA was elected the new Chair of the Committee, replacing Blair Lekstrom, MLA. Bruce Ralston, MLA, was re-elected as the Committee's Deputy Chair. The Committee also discussed travel logistics and its preliminary budget consultation plan.

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING

> *What we are asking, as a real key note on this particular paper to the people of B.C., is for their suggestions, opinions, advice, warnings on what we might do as a government when we look at climate change initiatives. The climate change agenda will certainly be a part of this coming budget. We're really looking to the people of B.C. to see what their ideas are.* (Hon. Carole Taylor, Minister of Finance, September 14, 2007).

This year, the Minister of Finance, Hon. Carole Taylor, released both the first quarter update for 2007/08 and the *Budget 2008 Consultation Paper* on September 14, 2007. Highlights of this year's *Quarterly Report* include:

- A forecasted surplus for 2007/08 of $1.6 billion, due to increased taxation revenue, higher federal transfers, and higher net income for ICBC;
- Continuation of the decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio, from 14.4 percent as of March 31, 2007 to an estimated 12.6 percent by the end of 2009/10;
- A minor downward revision of British Columbia's economic growth forecast to 2.9 percent (from 3 percent in Budget 2007); and
- Identification of ongoing risks to the fiscal plan including a declining housing sector in the United States, the unknown risks associated with mortgage-backed securities, the rising value of the Canadian dollar, increased volatility in revenues generated by natural gas production, and continued demands for increased funding in the health care sector.

The Minister of Finance met with the Committee on September 14 to elaborate on her chosen theme for this year's consultation process, as well as to respond to questions by committee members. Several Members queried the Minister on the process by which the Ministry of Finance considers the Committee's report in preparation of the upcoming provincial budget. In particular, they requested the Minister's assurance that all of the Committee's recommendations are given due consideration — particularly given the Committee's report is not issued until mid-November.

In response, the Minister of Finance indicated that the timing of the budget consultation process (September 15 to November 15) is set within the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, with the current timelines for the Committee's work having been in place since 2001. The Minister further explained that while the process for reviewing budgetary estimates does go on for several months, her ministry does not "put together our final recommendations to Treasury Board until after we've heard from your report, as well as other sources."

WHAT CHOICES WOULD YOU MAKE FOR A GREENER FUTURE?: THE BUDGET 2008 CONSULTATION PAPER

This year, the Minister of Finance's annual budget consultation paper asked British Columbians to consider what choices they would make to meet the provinces's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by one-third below current levels by 2020. The consultation paper provided the reader with basic information on: the main causes of household greenhouse gas emissions; the province's fiscal and economic forecasts for the next three years; and an overview of infrastructure expenditures undertaken by the province in 2006/07.

Copies of the budget consultation paper were also prepared in Chinese and Punjabi and made available on the Committee's website: leg.bc.ca/budgetconsultations.

BUDGET CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Ministry of Finance's budget 2008 consultation paper included six questions to be considered by British Columbians. In keeping with the theme of promoting a greener future for British Columbia, the public was requested to provide responses on three questions on options for reducing greenhouse gases:

- *What budget choices would you make to help reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gases by at least 33 percent below current levels by 2020?*
- *The Province currently provides tax incentives to encourage the purchase of hybrid vehicles, the production of wind power and the use of bio-fuel. What tax changes would you make to encourage environmentally responsible choices?*
- *What tax changes would you make to discourage British Columbians from activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions?*

The fourth question sought the public's opinions on how government can make the health care system sustainable while also addressing other priorities. The question posed is as follows:

- *Public health care is an important priority but growing costs and demand are a challenge. Since 2001, health care spending has increased 49 percent, from $8.8 billion to $13.1 billion. As a share of government ministry spending, health costs continue to crowd out other spending options. It increased from 28 percent of the budget in 1985, to 34 percent in 1995, and now stands at more than 44 percent. What budget choices would you* *make to sustain health care while balancing the need to invest in other areas like education and community programs?*

The fifth question posed by the Minister of Finance asked for ideas on additional programs to address homelessness and home affordability:

- *Last year, Balanced Budget 2007 provided an additional $476 million over four years towards housing supports for everyone from the homeless to homeowners. Are there other housing initiatives you would like us to consider?*

Finally, the public was given the opportunity to comment on any other issues related to the next provincial budget.

- *Other comments regarding your choices for Balanced Budget 2008.*

PUBLIC CONSULTATION METHODS

To encourage an open and inclusive public debate on British Columbia's budget and fiscal priorities, the Finance Committee employed four distinct methods of public consultation: public hearings, written submissions, on-line responses, as well as budget consultation flyers. The variety of options available to the public to provide input on the provincial budget and the high volume of submissions received makes this parliamentary budget consultation process unique in Canada.

As required by the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, the Committee commenced its annual public consultations on the upcoming provincial budget immediately following the release of the budget consultation paper on September 14, 2007. The consultation period was scheduled to last until October 19; however, due to both unanticipated difficulties in distributing the consultation paper to communities outside the lower mainland and strong public demand, the deadline for submissions was extended to October 26, 2007. We attribute this modest year-over-year decline in submissions mainly to the fact that this year's questionnaire asked respondents to provide more thorough written replies — rather than simply checking off priorities from a pre-determined list. This gave us more thoughtful and detailed, but fewer, submissions.

The Committee received significant support in promoting the budget consultation process from the Ministry of Finance. In addition to distributing the budget consultation paper to households across British Columbia, the Ministry ran advertisements alerting the public to the Committee's consultation process in the province's community and regional newspapers.

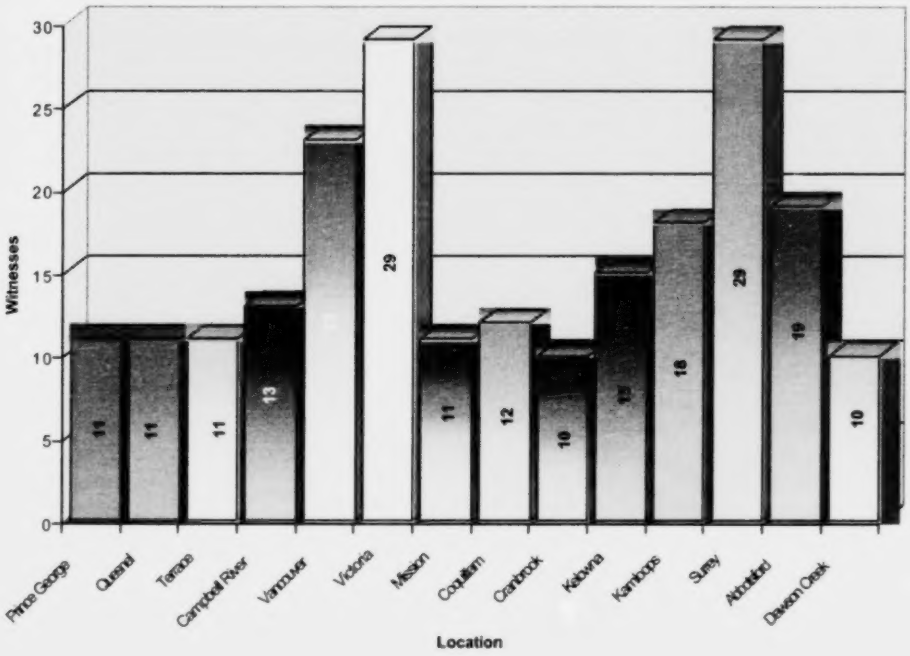
As per the Committee's practice, all submissions received — oral testimony, written submissions, on-line submissions, and flyers — were reviewed and considered in our deliberations. More detailed information on the submissions by type and by region may be found in Appendix A.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

In order to meet its statutory obligations, the Committee released its public consultation schedule on September 4, 2007 — ten days prior to the release of the budget consultation paper. The Committee publicized these hearings through advertisements in community and regional newspapers. Hearing notices were also posted on the Committee's website: leg.bc.ca/budgetconsultations.

From September 18 to October 19, 2007, the Committee held a total of 14 public hearings in the province's major regional centres. To accommodate strong demand, the hearing in Abbotsford was added and additional witnesses were scheduled for our public hearing in Victoria. In addition, an open mike session took place at the end of each hearing to accommodate citizens who were unable to pre-register with the Office of the Clerk of Committees. In total, the Committee heard 222 witnesses at the various public hearings (See Figure 1). A complete list of the groups and individuals appearing before the Committee may be found in Appendix B.

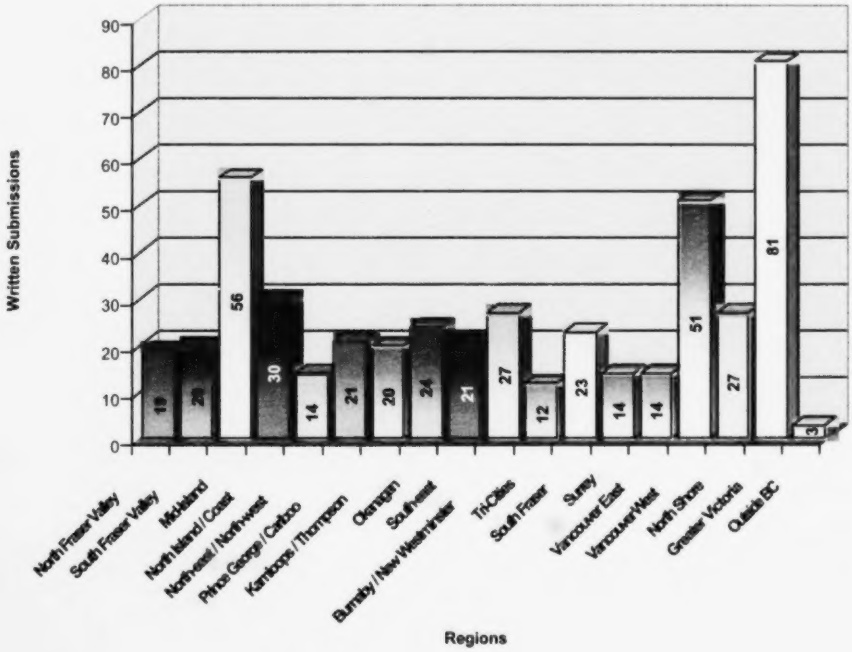
Figure 1: Public Hearing Attendance



WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

This year, 477 written submissions pertaining to the budget consultation process were received by mail, fax, or e-mail. As is the practice of the Committee, advertisements announcing the call for written submissions were placed in community papers across the province. This year, most of the written submissions came from individuals rather than from private businesses or community organizations. Figure 2 provides an overview of the submissions received by region. A complete list of written submissions received is provided in Appendix C.

Figure 2: Written Submissions by Region



ON-LINE RESPONSES

The Finance Committee again offered the public the opportunity to respond to the budget consultation questionnaire using the Committee's innovative on-line response form. This year, the Committee received 3,863 responses through the Committee's secure website. This year's questionnaire asked respondents to provide more thorough written replies — rather than simply checking off priorities from a pre-determined list. The Committee is pleased in this change of format as it affords the opportunity to provide a more in-depth response to the questions posed.

Internet-based consultations provide exciting, yet challenging opportunities for the work of parliamentary committees. With respect to our web-based consultations, we observed the following:

- For the first time, links to the budget consultation web page were posted by several groups on popular social networking sites, the end of each hearing to accommodate citizens who were unable to pre-register with the Office of the Clerk of Committees. In total, the Committee heard 222 witnesses at the various public hearings (See Figure 1). A complete list of the groups and individuals appearing before the Committee may be found in Appendix B.

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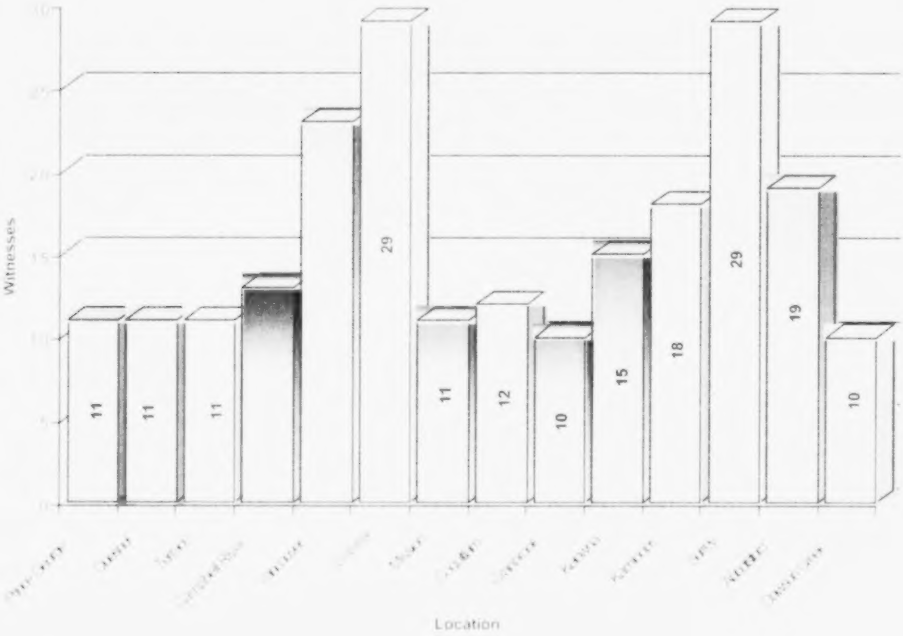

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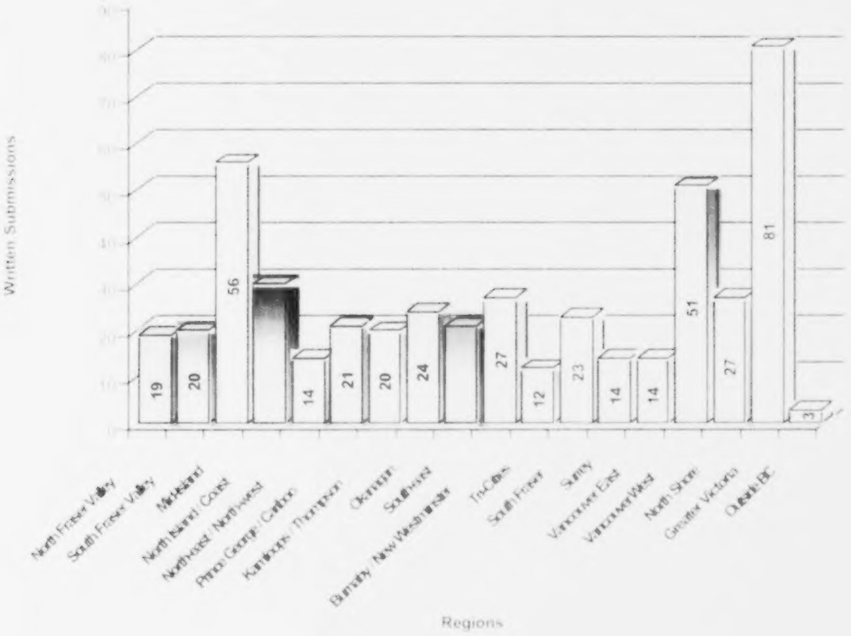

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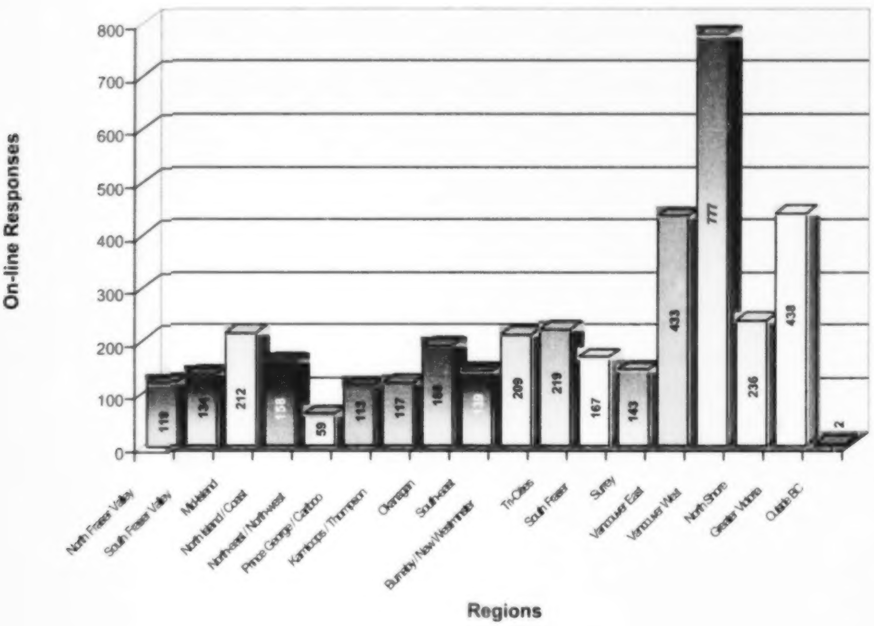
- For the first time, links to the budget consultation web page were posted by several groups on popular social networking sites.

- Individuals posted the links to the consultation page on a variety of discussion boards and on-line news webpages, and
- Several web-based organizations asked their members to 'cut and paste' recommendations into the budget consultation response form.

These three observations suggest that advocacy groups are organizing and encouraging support for their positions through the Committee process. We also noted that the number of on-line responses received from largely urban ridings greatly outnumber submissions from more rural or remote locations in British Columbia.

Figure 3 provides an overview of the on-line responses received by region, with participants providing verifiable contact information listed in Appendix D.

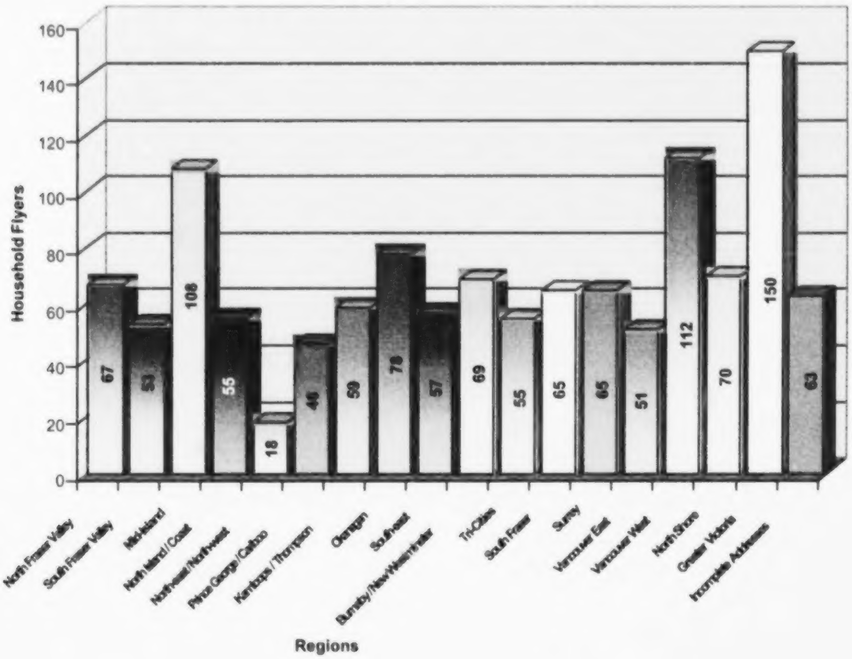
Figure 3: On-Line Submissions by Region



HOUSEHOLD FLYERS

Again this year, the Ministry of Finance mailed a copy of the budget 2008 consultation paper to households across British Columbia. On October 16, 2007, the Committee was informed that there was a delay in distributing the consultation paper to some regions. To accommodate those British Columbians who may not have received their consultation paper until late in the process, the Committee extended its consultation deadline for on-line and household mailers by one week to October 26, 2007. In total, the Committee received 1,241 flyer responses. A regional breakdown is provided in Figure 4. Participants providing complete and verifiable contact information on the household flyer are listed in Appendix E.

Figure 4: Flyers Received by Region



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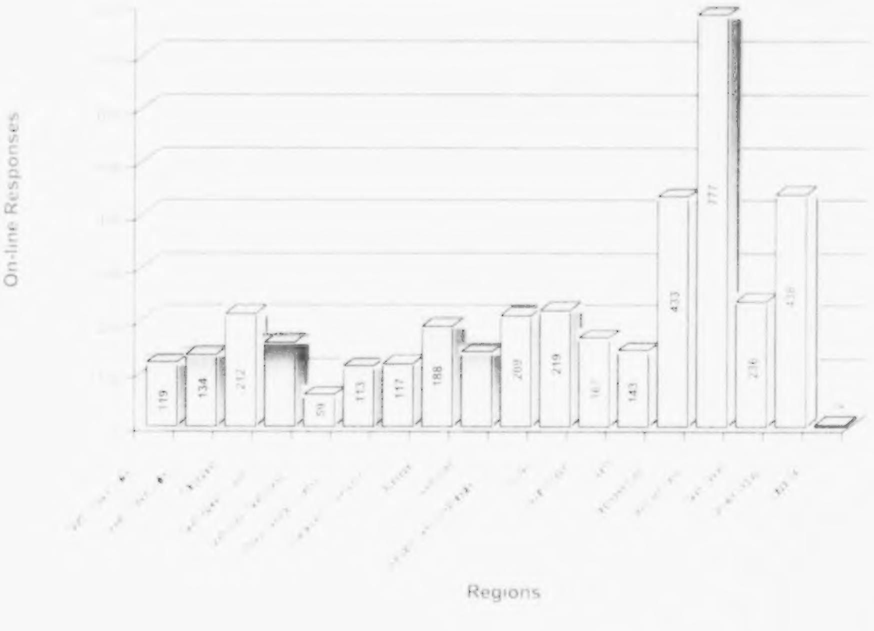

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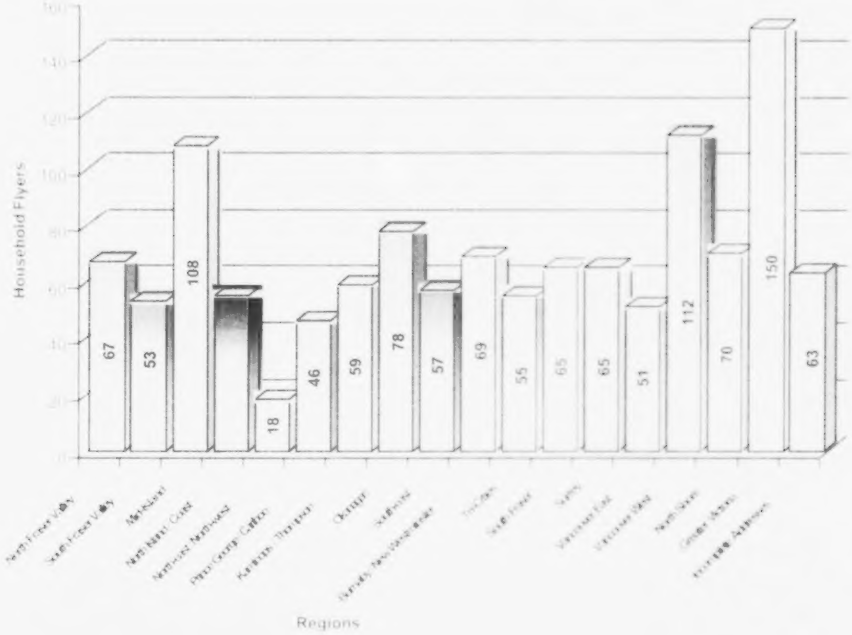

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

May 29, 2007	Organization meeting	Victoria
September 14, 2007	Briefing	Victoria
September 18, 2007	Public Hearing	Prince George
September 18, 2007	Public Hearing	Quesnel
September 19, 2007	Public Hearing	Terrace
September 20, 2007	Public Hearing	Campbell River
September 21, 2007	Public Hearing	Vancouver
October 3, 2007	Public Hearing	Victoria
October 5, 2007	Public Hearing	Mission
October 5, 2007	Public Hearing	Coquitlam
October 9, 2007	Public Hearing	Cranbrook
October 10, 2007	Public Hearing	Kelowna
October 10, 2007	Public Hearing	Kamloops
October 11, 2007	Public Hearing	Surrey
October 12, 2007	Public Hearing	Abbotsford
October 19, 2007	Public Hearing	Dawson Creek
October 29, 2007	Deliberations	Victoria
October 31, 2007	Deliberations	Victoria
November 6, 2007	Deliberations and Adoption of the Report	Victoria

ANALYSIS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

> *Increased surpluses provide choices for British Columbians. These include ways to encourage environmentally responsible choices for consumers, businesses and government; increased spending for health care and other government programs; and lower taxes and reduced debt. However, commitments to these areas must be affordable today as well as being sustainable in years ahead.* (Ministry of Finance, *Quarterly Report: First Quarter, April to June 2007*, page 4).

The responses the Committee received from our four methods of public consultation yielded a diversity of opinions on the province's future fiscal and economic priorities. While the Committee annually faces the daunting challenge of reviewing the thousands of submissions received, never before has the Committee confronted such a stark difference between what we heard at our 14 public hearings and what we read in the written, on-line, and flyer responses.

In reviewing the transcripts and briefing materials prepared by witnesses at the public hearings, few opted to propose recommendations to address climate change, the delivery of sustainable health care, or housing initiatives. Rather, the overwhelming majority of organizations appearing before the Committee opted to use their time to promote issues such as post-secondary education, child care, arts funding, and other topics commonly raised with this Committee.

In contrast, we received thousands of on-line and flyer submissions articulating a wide array of possible solutions for a greener future in response to the budget consultation questionnaire. We have concerns that the openness of the Committee's on-line consultation process may lend itself to an over-representation of responses from advocacy organizations capable of mobilizing small, yet highly-motivated, sub-sections of the population. The Committee highlights this observation — not to diminish the important contributions made by the individuals who took the time to complete the on-line survey — but rather to recognize the challenges faced by committee members when making recommendations on the province's budget priorities.

It is clear to committee members that the province's sound fiscal framework and surplus budget projections are raising the expectations of British Columbians for additional resources for on-going programs and services. However, the potential for declining natural resource revenues and a slowing U.S. economy may challenge the government's revenue projections. Therefore, we have strong reservations about recommending that government increase spending in programs that result in significant ongoing expenses to the provincial treasury. It is this Committee's opinion that surplus revenues should, for the most part, be directed to one-time capital projects, or to paying down the provincial debt.

Committee members acknowledge that there is a great diversity of opinions concerning the province's budget priorities. Our report is required to not only address the questions contained in the budget 2008 consultation paper — namely reducing greenhouse gases, sustaining health care, and providing housing options — but also to reflect on the other budgetary priorities identified by British Columbians. To this end, our report follows the following format.

This report begins by reviewing the responses received on three questions pertaining to climate change. This analysis includes a review of the large-scale programs and policy themes suggested by the public in Question 1; the public's suggestions for positive tax incentive-based programs requested for Question 2; and a review of the public's proposals for tax changes to discourage greenhouse gas emissions as per Question 3. These summaries are intended to highlight the range of possibilities available to the government for action on climate change.

However, the Committee does not possess the capacity to assess the financial implications or effectiveness of the various and often conflicting recommendations presented by witnesses throughout the consultation process. We therefore make only a few specific recommendations on the climate change portion of the paper, but have tried to provide the Minister of Finance — and the public at large — with a fair representation of what we heard from the public as *potential* options to address climate change. In our view, the responsibility to conduct comprehensive technical reviews on these recommendations must reside with government.

Second, although Question 4 in the budget consultation paper focused on the sustainability of the health care system, British Columbians obviously are more focused on ways to enhance service delivery. Out of respect for those members of the public who did give us their ideas on health care, we have included the major ideas we heard. However, the Committee also provides a caution to government that British Columbians may not yet fully appreciate the daunting challenge to the sustainability of health care in B.C. that changing demographics represents.

Third, we address the question concerning other housing initiatives that government should consider. While the majority of responses to this question came from the on-line and flyer responses, we also highlight several submissions that emerged from the public hearings.

Fourth, our Committee examines the myriad of other priorities raised at the 14 public hearings, and through the written submissions and on-line and flyer responses. It is always a challenge for the Committee to decide which issues in this "catch-all" section to highlight. This year we tried to err on the side of covering too many issues, as opposed to too few.

MEETING BRITISH COLUMBIA'S CLIMATE CHANGE GOALS

Question 1: What budget choices would you make to help reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gases by at least 33 percent below current levels by 2020?

The first question of the budget 2008 consultation paper asked British Columbians to identify potential investments or non-tax related projects that the government can adopt to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There are diverse perspectives on how to best achieve B.C.'s climate change goals, but it is clear that British Columbians want government to take action on climate change. In this section, we identify the prominent themes we heard during the consultation process. The key themes for government action we heard include:

- maintain a strong economy while reducing the B.C.'s debt;
- take decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and articulate what individuals, businesses, and the public sector can do to change behaviour;
- continue to address a broad range of environmental protection issues in addition to climate change; and
- expedite investments in public and rapid transit projects.

The Committee wishes to also highlight some of the other themes contained in the thousands of submissions received: increased subsidies for public transit and cycling infrastructure; the need for the government to lead by example with respect to green building standards; and the potential for the adoption of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards.

MAINTAIN A STRONG ECONOMY AND PAY DOWN THE DEBT

A clear and unsolicited message the Committee heard was that British Columbia's measures to reduce greenhouse gases must neither adversely affect the B.C.'s strong economic position nor increase the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Indeed, there is strong demand from British Columbians for the government to adopt a more rigorous approach to eliminate the province's debt. This message was reiterated time and time again in the on-line consultations.

Many British Columbians believe it is possible to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gases by 33 percent by 2020, but that this target can only be met if supported by a strong and growing economy.

The Committee concurs with the presentation made by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that it is possible to grow the economy and protect the environment at the same time. Without a robust economy, meeting the government's climate change goals will be a significant challenge.

Below is a sample of the comments we heard concerning the need to carefully balance sound fiscal policies with government policies to address climate change.

> *"The Chamber believes that these choices should focus on a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable economy. The choices that are made to achieve a greener future must balance economic concerns with the need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It is only if we have a strong economy will be able to square the circle of tackling the challenge of climate change with the imperative of continued economic growth for all British Columbians."* (B.C. Chamber of Commerce).

> *"We have to be very careful in dealing with greenhouse gases, because there are unintended economic consequences that may arise from them. The caution that I would provide is that yes, we can say we want to reduce greenhouse gases, but we must look at the unintended consequences as well, especially some of the*

> *economic impacts. The cost of putting in some measures for greenhouse gases may far outweigh the economic benefit of spending that money in other areas. "* (Vancouver Board of Trade).
>
> *"Use surpluses to reduce the provincial debt. Do not use surpluses to initiate programs which have on-going yearly costs to maintain. "* (Michael Hinman, Port Moody).
>
> *"When times are good, as they are now, surpluses must go to paying down the debt. The savings in interest costs on reducing the debt should be reinvested in health care and energy conservation."* (Michael A Yusko, Chilliwack).

TAKE DECISIVE ACTION TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

While British Columbians clearly want action to facilitate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, many are unaware of their own choices to reduce climate change impacts. They suggest that part of the government's leadership role should include providing detailed, accessible information on the choices available.

Witnesses identified a need for government to establish a comprehensive clearinghouse for all information to the effects of climate change on British Columbia and identify incentive programs currently in place for individuals and businesses. Currently, this information is not readily accessible as it is spread across government ministries, Crown agencies and the private sector.

Mirroring the government's ActNow BC initiative that informs British Columbians about healthier lifestyle choices, the Committee heard that a comprehensive strategy is needed to provide information on what businesses and individuals can do to change their behaviours to impact climate change. The Committee envisions the government developing a website that would include the following:

- a repository for academic papers and government studies on the impacts of climate change on British Columbia's environment, economy, and social infrastructure;
- information on the practical every-day steps individuals and businesses can take to reduce their environmental impact; and
- a clearinghouse of programs and ideas from government, individuals and business that will lead to behavioural change.

Here is a sample of the many submissions we received on this topic.

> *"It is important to invest in education with regards to the environment. We won't change our lifestyle without understanding why we must. "* (Fraser Valley Conservancy).
>
> *"There would be a need for further education of the public on what they can do as individuals, or as organizations to be part of the solution. There is need for greater education of the relationship between particular actions and the impact on the generation of greenhouse gas."* (Janet Pattinson, Sorrento).
>
> *"I would spend money on education. If the population is not educated then it will not respond to any government incentives with respect to climate change."* (Claus Andrup, Maple Ridge).
>
> *"Fund education programs for children and adults to encourage energy-saving choices by the public. "* (Marta Goodwin, Vancouver).
>
> *"Please provide more public education for awareness about the ways the average citizen can reduce greenhouse gases, especially pertaining to household waste, personal vehicles, heating/cooling. "* (Holly Niebergal, Kelowna).

CONTINUE TO ADDRESS OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Another unsolicited theme we heard in our public hearings across the province, was that the government's emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions should not overshadow other important environmental issues, such as air and water quality, parks, and conservation programs. For example:

- In Quesnel and Coquitlam, we heard serious concerns over water quality and water management that require ongoing monitoring.
- In Prince George, we heard from civic representatives requesting additional resources for the implementation and monitoring of that city's air quality management.
- In Terrace and Mission, concerns were raised by the mayors and city officials over issues such as river dredging and dike protection and construction.
- In Kamloops and Victoria, we heard requests for the government to invest greater resources in environmental monitoring, upgrading provincial parks and preserving Forest Service recreation sites.
- In on-line and written submissions, we received requests that government increase the level of funding to the Ministry of Environment for conservation and management of fish and wildlife resources, including additional resources for enforcement and compliance measures.

The Finance Committee strongly endorses the government's goal of reducing greenhouse gases. However, we remind the government that environmental protection goes beyond the reduction of greenhouse gases: it must include provisions for safe drinking water, clean air, conservation officers, healthy lands, fish and wildlife, and recreational opportunities for all British Columbians. We provide some of the comments on the need for a broader environmental agenda below.

> *"The City of Prince George appreciates the funding that has been received in the past years for the wood stove exchange program, the Burn It Smart! information session, funding for the implementation committee and the research completed to date. … The City of Prince George, along with its partners in air quality improvement in the local Ministry of Environment are working to carry out the recommendations specific to the municipality but additional funding is necessary to complete these tasks."* (City of Prince George, Councillor Don Zurowski).

> *"Resources are very scarce. We all know that. The budget process has an ability to allocate resources, and they seem to be able to move resources around. We just want to keep the Committee aware that there are other health concerns out there that need to be considered while climate change is being put forward."* (Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce).

> *"We are requesting that the Finance and Government Services Committee recommend that the provincial government undertake the following: review the proposed flood mitigation funding and recommend that it be substantially increased to meet the needs of our citizens, and make flood mitigation funds available over a shorter period of time and request the federal government provide matching funds."* (District of Maple Ridge, Mike Davies).

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

We also received several requests for the government to increase the Ministry's budget in order to make both significant improvements in park infrastructure and enhance conservation efforts.

Here are the submissions we received on this topic.

> *"Our expanded provincial parks system of 893 parks and protected areas needs an immediate infusion of funds in the amount of $30 million annually. This will provide the immediate care and attention necessary to restore ecological systems that function within parks and begin to create a management regime to manage our parks and protected areas, scientifically, to world class standards. This will ensure their long term health for the economic, environmental, and social benefit of current and future generations."* (Elders Council for Parks in British Columbia).

> *"We urge you to stand up for BC's parks and protected areas by supporting improved legislation and increased funding and staffing levels that will see our parks protected now and into the future."* (Western Canada Wilderness Committee).

> *"We recommend that adequate funds from the surplus be used to fulfil the government's promise to maintain the Forest Service recreation sites, roads and trail in the heartlands and adequately manage our fish and wildlife resources on a scientific basis. To accomplish the latter we recommend restoring Ministry of Environment staff and budgets to at least the pre-2002 levels."* (Kamloops and District Fish and Game Association).

> *"(We need) more conservation officers to look after the fish & wildlife values of this province. (8000 sq km is just too much for one CO). Have more people in the field making sure there is not a problem with the fish or wildlife."* (J. Douglas Peck, Sparwood).

The Committee believes that the Ministry of Environment must play a central role not only in addressing B.C.'s climate change goals, but also a much stronger role in wildlife conservation, regulatory enforcement, and parks management

EXPEDITE INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

A significant number of on-line responses asked the provincial government to consider providing additional resources, in partnership with the federal government, for public transit options. We heard calls for specific rapid transit projects for B.C.'s urban centres, as well as requests for expanded bus transit services throughout the province.

RAPID TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

A common refrain we heard was the need for the government to make resources available to accommodate a significant expansion of rapid transit in B.C.'s urban centres. We heard a strong desire for the government to provide additional resources to TransLink for the construction of the Evergreen Line, as well as resources to provide commuter rail to connect the West Shore communities to the City of Victoria. Our on-line consultations, in particular, highlighted several options for rapid transit in the growing communities south of the Fraser River, including Skytrain extensions, a light-rail system following Highway 1, and commuter rail along the old interurban tracks in the Fraser Valley.

Some of the specific suggestions the Committee received on this topic are highlighted below.

Evergreen Line

The Committee heard requests from the Tri-Cities region that a rapid transit system is a top priority. The public is asking all levels of government — local, regional, provincial, and federal — to come to the table to fund this crucial transportation infrastructure project.

While the majority of submissions on this topic favoured any form of light rail to Coquitlam Centre, we also heard several concerns from the affected communities that the proposed light rail option connecting to Lougheed Town Centre would not provide an effective alternative to the automobile in terms of travel times.

Here are some of the comments we heard on this topic.

> *"Transportation infrastructure for the northeast sector deserves the highest priority. It is an urgent need that a forward-thinking government recognizes this and deals with the problem. Now is the time to spend the money on the future sustainability of the fifth-largest, and growing, community in B.C. We are experiencing traffic gridlock today; by tomorrow we will be fundamentally inaccessible. We need a guaranteed investment in our future."* (Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce).

> *"Finance rapid transit — not slow mass transit such as the Evergreen Line."* (Andrew Kirk, Port Moody).

> *"Build the upcoming Evergreen Line so that it is compatible with the Millenium Line and so that one does not need to change trains at the Lougheed station."* (George Kovacic, Burnaby).

Greater Victoria Commuter Rail

The Committee received requests from Vancouver Island residents for a commuter rail system linking ex-urban communities — such as Duncan and the Cowichan Valley — to cities on the West Shore and downtown Victoria. Respondents explained that communities north of Victoria are growing due to their affordability, but the commute to Victoria as a consequence has become congested and time-consuming. They suggested that current rail systems are targeted for tourists, and should be expanded for daily commuters. Here is a sample of what we heard.

> *"It still puzzles me why there is no commuter train from Duncan to Victoria. The track exists. Lease some vehicles, put some cheap platforms up and just do it."* (Mark Waddington, Victoria).

> *"Better transit systems in Greater Victoria – provide light rail transit from western communities as Trans Canada is choked with cars trying to get into city."* (Cheryl Thorpe, Victoria).

Fraser Valley Light Rail

We also received many requests from individuals and advocacy groups in the Fraser Valley for light rail transit services to and from their communities. Many explained that this would not only ease traffic congestion, but it would also support the government initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, there was no clear consensus as to which route would be preferable. Some submissions suggested that the twinned Port Mann Bridge and Highway 1 widening should have a light rail component constructed from the outset; others proposed a commuter rail system using the old interurban rail corridor or an expanded SkyTrain option to service Surrey and Langley.

Some of the comments we heard on this topic are presented below.

> *"For Budget 2008, we propose the government immediately plan rapid implementation of a modern clean-air interurban passenger rail service for the Fraser Valley, connecting South-of-Fraser communities from*

> *Chilliwack to Surrey, with a target date for initial service by the end of 2009, and a plan to subsequently extend service over the Fraser River into Vancouver."* (Rail for the Valley).
>
> *"We need now, more than ever, rail-based transportation, bus rapid transit, bicycle-friendly cities and towns, and a growth-management strategy that's consisten t with the B.C. government's stated environmental objectives. If the government is sincere in its desire — and I believe it is — then it's going to take a lot more than changing light bulbs."* (Fraser Valley Conservancy).

Bearing in mind the message that the government must continue to manage the debt-to-GDP ratio, we strongly urge the government to work closely with local communities, regional and federal governments, and the private sector to expedite the construction of much-needed rapid transit options in Metro Vancouver.

BUS TRANSIT

A recurring theme we heard was the need for increased bus transit, not only in Metro Vancouver and the Greater Victoria regions, but also in smaller communities throughout B.C. The calls for increased public transit come in conjunction with a growing sense of environmental consciousness, and an emerging desire for transportation alternatives in the province. Below are some of the comments we received.

> *"Provide municipalities more funding for transit - both capital & subsidized operations."* (Pat Leith, Ladysmith).
>
> *"We would really like to see a budget that follows through on some of the existing commitments on funding to public transit in the lower mainland and at the same time provides additional funding to develop and implement a transportation strategy for the province that puts B.C. on a path towards at least a 90-percent reduction in transportation-related greenhouse gasess by 2050."* (West Coast Environmental Law).

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

In addition to enhanced public transit options, many British Columbians — predominantly, but not exclusively from Metro Vancouver — advocated for enhanced cycling facilities. This infrastructure includes partnering with local and regional governments to expedite the construction of more bike lanes, bike racks, and designated cycling routes throughout and between B.C.'s communities. Some of the comments are presented below:

> *"We should improve bike lanes. For example, have bike lanes leading to all schools. This way, students can bike all the way to school and back home."* (Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School, Abbotsford).
>
> *"Unfortunately for cyclists in Vancouver, there are few facilities for the increasing numbers of us. The government should definitely be encouraging this healthy lifestyle choice by offering us more bike racks (there are currently hardly any!), better bike routes, and European style segregated bike paths. More car-free areas of the city create a more vibrant street life also enhancing commercial activity."* (Patricia Klein, Vancouver).

GREEN STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS

There were also calls for the government to lead by example and showcase what is possible by adopting green building standards for public buildings. For example, we received a submission from the B.C. School Trustees Association illustrating the cost energy savings that can accrue by retrofitting public buildings to use geothermal heating rather than traditional natural gas. We also heard several submissions from university student unions calling for the government to adopt stringent green building standards and provide resources to upgrade existing buildings.

Here is what they had to say.

> *"As you will be aware the Ministry of Education is working on several initiatives in a climate action plan and we would encourage you to support their efforts such as targeted tax reductions to assist with infrastructure upgrades and greenhouse gas emission reductions. An example of the latter is refitting schools with geo- thermal systems which realized in one case of a large school an annual reduction in natural gas costs from $12,000 to less than $100. Eliminating or reducing provincial tax on all kinds of green building initiatives (including geothermal plants and energy efficient lighting, etc) would be helpful."* (British Columbia School Trustees Association).

> *"We request that the B.C. government adopt official policy on green building standards for all new public buildings, subject all public buildings to an energy audit and adopt long-term policy for regular scheduled upgrades of efficiency standards to ultimately achieve carbon neutrality in all public buildings, including colleges and universities. This is a really exciting thing. At my institution, UBC Okanagan, by 2010 we will be 100 percent emission-free — and that's actually thanks to all of your help — except for the cars that will be driving onto campus."* (University of British Columbia Students Union – Okanagan Campus).

LEADERSHIP IN ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN BUILDINGS

Another general area of interest that emerged from our various forms of consultation was for the government to consider amending the B.C. building code to require all new buildings to meet standards in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), subject to adaptation to the various climate regions in the province. The LEED standards consider the categories of sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Other requests included tax breaks for LEED-certified buildings, and rebate programs for energy-efficient buildings. Below are some of the comments we received on this topic.

> *"We're recommending that the government use Property Transfer Tax revenue to provide a rebate to a buyer of a commercial building that meets or exceeds the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, green building rating system certification levels. LEED certification is achieved through a point rating system with categories certified silver, gold or platinum. The rebate program we recommend is similar to the residential program, except the rebate amounts are proportionally higher. We recommend the government provide a PST rebate to renovators of existing commercial buildings, making their commercial buildings more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly according to the LEED system."* (Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver).

> *"Residential and business buildings that are built to the highest LEED standards should be so strongly rewarded, in terms of their tax treatment, and low-efficiency structures (buildings, planned subdivisions) so strongly penalized, that soon no-one will build anything which is not certified at the highest LEED standards."* (N. Jay Zimmerman, Bowen Island).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

1. maintain a growing economy and pay down the debt.
2. take decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
3. provide clear and concise information on programs and measures available to individuals and businesses on steps they may take to reduce greenhouse gases and incentives that are available to do so.
4. strengthen government's commitment to water and air quality monitoring, river dredging and river diking and consider increases to the budget of the Ministry of Environment to bolster wildlife conservation, park infrastructure, and regulatory enforcement.
5. continue to invest, as heavily as possible, in rapid transit infrastructure and bus transit.

ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE CHOICES

> *Question 2: The Province currently provides tax incentives to encourage the purchase of hybrid vehicles, the production of wind power and the use of bio-fuel. What tax changes would you make to encourage environmentally responsible choices?*

Throughout our consultation process, we heard numerous suggestions on tax changes that the government may consider implementing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia. Primarily, we heard that the government should:

- enhance incentives to promote energy efficient households;
- augment programs to support British Columbia's agricultural sector and the consumption of locally-produced foods;
- bolster resources available to promote a made-in-B.C. biofuels sector;
- endorse the trucking industry's move to introduce EnviroTrucks on British Columbia's highways; and
- consider measures to promote environmentally-friendly consumer product packaging.

It is this Committee's opinion that government should choose incentives over penalties to promote environmentally-responsible choices, particularly where incentives will bring a similar result.

In this section, we also review proposals we heard for the government to enhance research and development into alternative energy sources, as well as calls for a provincial tax credit for public transit passes. We also examine some of the comments we received concerning the province's hybrid vehicle rebate program.

INCENTIVES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT HOUSEHOLDS

Advocacy organizations for sustainable energy presented submissions requesting the government introduce incentives for British Columbians to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We also received numerous written and online submissions from individuals who recommended the province find ways to reduce expenditures on home energy retrofits. In most of these submissions, we observed a desire for tax credits, grants or rebates to promote the use of clean energy, such a solar or geothermal. Below are some of the comments we heard on this topic.

> *"Fundamentally, the problem is that if I want to lay out $5,000 to invest in making my home more efficient, I would love to have that as a tax credit, or I'd love to be able to access a loan fund where I can draw on the loan and have the cost of the loan repayments taken off my hydro bills or my gas bills. So we're looking at income tax credits for expenditures on retrofits and on green heating systems, such as heat pumps, solar hot water systems."* (B.C. Sustainable Energy Association).

> *"I get calls daily from our clients, who are seriously interested in making retrofits to their houses to improve our environmental situation and lower greenhouse gases. By the time I am perfectly frank with them on what they can expect back from the government, many times it's not enough for them to take the step to make the necessary upgrades to their homes."* (AmeriSpec).

> *We recommend the government reinvest revenue from the property transfer tax to provide a rebate to buyers of homes that meet or exceed the Canadian Home Builders Association's Built Green B.C. program standards. A buyer of a Built Green B.C. bronze-level home would receive a $2,500 rebate on the PTT program, $3,500 for a silver-level home, $5,000 for a gold-level home, and a $7,000 rebate for a platinum-level home.* (Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver; Canadian Home Builders Association of British Columbia).

INCENTIVES FOR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION

Again this year, the Committee heard submissions from agricultural sector representatives who spoke of a need for the government to invest in promoting British Columbia's agricultural products in order to encourage healthier lifestyles and support local food production. In addition, we also received submissions from environmental and citizens organizations, as well as individuals, requesting that government provide more incentives for small scale agriculture and the sale of locally-produced food around the province. A key theme in these submissions was a desire to reduce the distance food travels from the farm to the consumer's plate.

Here are some of the comments we received on the topic.

> *"In this morning's paper there was an ad for ActNow BC encouraging people to eat nutritious food. I thought it was an outstanding ad. One component, I think, was missing. It didn't say: Buy B.C. produce... We're promoting the nutrition but not promoting buying local B.C. fruit."* (Domenic Rampone, Kelowna).

> *"Consumers are asking serious questions about how food is produced, processed and distributed. There's an increasing realization that the production and consumption of food leads to global warming. We're seeing the rapid emergence of and support for local and regional farmers' markets, good-food boxes, collective kitchens, community gardens, field-to-table festivals, nutritious meals for children and youth, fairly traded products such as coffee and chocolate and, of course, the hundred-mile diet. In short, an alternative to the global industrial food system is growing."* (Council of Canadians – Kamloops Chapter).

> *"Encourage buying locally produced food at fair value. Sustainable farming has much to offer health wise to consumers and the planet. As a small farmer it's frustrating having to compete with mass produced, cheap quality, transported products."* (Diane Dunaway, Williams Lake).

Representatives from B.C.'s agricultural organizations appeared before the Committee to suggest several additional program and policy changes to bolster domestic agricultural production. We heard requests from witnesses in both Kelowna and Dawson Creek that B.C. must take full advantage of federal funding available under the federal-provincial agricultural policy framework and the *Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan*. In both cases, the federal government contributes $1.50 for every dollar contributed by the province for program development.

Witnesses explained that the potential benefits of increased provincial support for these programs are significant. The agricultural policy framework has focused on building a competitive and innovative sector, effective risk management, and increasing contributions to society's priorities. Similarly, the Committee learned that relatively small investments in the cost-sharing arrangement under the *Environmental Farm Plan* permitted regional districts to purchase 'stump grinders' to reduce the burning of wood removed from orchards — thus reducing the release of particulate matter into the atmosphere. Here is what we heard on these programs.

> *"We recommend that the provincial government ensure the budget for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has adequate funding to provide for full participation in the next round of the federal-provincial Agriculture Policy Framework – Growing Forward to ensure B.C. receives the full benefit of federal programming initiatives that will be available."* (B.C. Grain Producer's Association).

> *"The Environmental Farm Plan program has encouraged significant improvements in environmental conservation on participating farms. Uptake of this program is strong and continues to grow. The EFP program provides leverage of almost 9 to 1 for the province's contribution to environmental improvement.*

> *This is a very high return on investment, and it is investment worth making in the environment."* (British Columbia Fruit Growers Association).

We also heard from the B.C. Food Processors Association who identified a need for an industry-led centre for technology and product development, and providing research and other services to strengthen and expand the capacity of British Columbia's food processors and bio-products producers to develop new products and processes. The witnesses noted that the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta have already developed such facilities and made a similar request.

> *"Our study indicates that there is emphatic industry support for this technology development centre. Furthermore, in addition to there is a strong demand for business consulting services, with energy management near the top of the demand list. Accordingly, the BC Food and Bio-Products Technology Development Center will become a long-term energy efficiency mechanism for the food processing and bio-products industries."* (B.C. Food Processors Association).

An additional issue raised by representatives within the agricultural sector was that the new meat inspection regulation requiring a licensed abattoir to process all meat was creating hardships to owners of ranches in terms of additional transportation costs and losses of farm gate sales. While the Committee acknowledges that government has contributed significantly to increasing abattoir capacity, we heard some concerns that the new regulations were having a negative impact on some small producers. Below is a sample of what we heard.

> *Increase funding for the transition process to licensed abattoirs. Some areas of the province have none. For example, the one in Kelowna has closed down, and there's nothing available. If a local farmer has one cow that he needs to slaughter, he has to transport it to Falkland or Salmon Arm.* (Dominic Rampone, Kelowna).

> *I want to bring to your attention is a meat transition assistance program. We have worked like dogs to get as many applications in hand for the implementation of a meat inspection regulation on September 30. I'm pleased to report that we have some 66 applications in the pipe. They're not all built. Cabinet has given us a little bit of leeway with the change in the order-in-council that gives us some leeway.* (B.C. Food Processors Association).

BIOFUELS

Representatives from the biodiesel and ethanol production sector appeared before the Committee to discuss the resources required to meet the government's commitment to a 5 percent average renewable fuel standard for diesel by 2010 to help reduce emissions and advance the domestic renewable fuel industry. In particular, the B.C. Biodiesel Association, supported by a presentation from the B.C. Grain Producer's Association, requested that the government consider four policy changes to permit the wide-spread adoption of biofuels in British Columbia. These include:

- eliminating requirements for marking of the renewable fuel component in specified fuels;
- continuing the tax exemptions afforded to biofuels under the *Motor Fuel Tax Act;*
- eliminating B.C. motor fuel taxes for the renewable component of off-road, marine, heating oil, and rail fuels; and
- offsetting the initial costs of capital equipment required in order to expand biodiesel availability.

Of particular concern was the industry's need for distribution infrastructure, such as tanks and in-line blending facilities, to ensure price competitiveness and to ensure product availability. The industry came to the Committee with a request for a competitive grant program with a funding amount of $2 million, to be matched by industry.

Below are the some of the specific comments we heard on this topics:

> *"Biodiesel adoption requires distribution infrastructure such as tanks and in-line blending facilities. This infrastructure will add greatly to the viability of a biodiesel market of the scope envisioned in the British Columbia Energy Plan's biofuels target, ensuring price competitiveness to diesel and product availability to enable adoption in government, industrial and commercial fleets. A competitive grant program with a funding amount of $2,000,000, matched by industry, would benefit BC's entire biodiesel industry."* (Canadian Bioenergy Corporation).

> *"Remove the tax on biodiesel that is dyed. Also provide grants to distributors for expensive equipment to dye biodiesel, or make it easier for biodiesel distributors to get the dying authority from the fuel taxation branch."* (Agri-Green Biodiesel Inc).

However, some concerned individuals made submissions expressing reservations regarding the subsidization of biofuels. These submissions questioned whether the energy required in the production of biofuels negated their environmental benefits, while others expressed concerns about using agricultural lands for energy production. Their comments include:

> *"Biofuel is actually worse for the environment than fossil fuel in terms of energy in to get energy out. This should not be a tax advantage."* (Jackie Buston, Saanichton)

> *"Biofuels seem unlikely to be able to sustain energy usage anything like that which we are used to and attempting to use them to do so is highly likely to have severe consequences for our environment and our food supply."* (David Steele, Vancouver).

The Committee believes that before choices are made by government on how to reduce greenhouse gases, they must be thoroughly researched and peer-reviewed by the appropriate experts to ensure net benefits. The Committee also stresses the need to focus on fostering a B.C. biodiesel production industry with incentives that allow fair competition with the United States and Alberta.

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

The Committee received an interesting submission from the B.C. Trucking Association that includes possible approaches the government and the trucking industry may adopt to reduce greenhouse gases both within the long haul and local trucking sectors.

With respect to the long-haul sector, the industry association advocated for both the federal and provincial governments to provide financial incentives — ranging from grants or rebates to no interest loans or tax credits — to encourage the adoption of the EnviroTruck Program. To meet the EnviroTruck standard, trucks would require:

- a 2007, or newer, heavy truck engine, plus
- a combination - depending on the type of vehicle operation - of various fuel conservation enhancing devices. For example, these devices may include speed limiter activation, auxiliary power units to eliminate truck idling, fuel efficient wide-base single tires, aerodynamic enhancements, longer length double trailer configurations.

According to the B.C. Trucking Association's calculations, a highway tractor-trailer deploying a full package of fuel saving devices can reduce fuel consumption by 25 to 30 percent and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 50 tonnes per year.

The B.C. Trucking Association made four recommendations concerning the EnviroTruck program, including rebates on the purchase of new vehicles; sales tax exemptions for trucks with 2007 or newer engines as well as for proven, qualified fuel efficiency equipment; waiving vehicle licensing fees for the first year on 2007 or newer trucks; and for the government to guarantee low-cost or no-cost loans to companies and owner-operators to purchase 2007 or newer trucks in partnership with banks and credit unions. Similar proposals were also put forward by the B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association.

> *"The (trucking) industry is ready, willing and able to help the provincial government achieve the environmental objectives set out in the 2007 Speech to the Throne. A quicker fleet turnover and decrease in the average age of the provincial fleet, in combination with increased use of fuel-saving technologies and strategies will benefit all British Columbians."* (B.C. Trucking Association).

> *"It must be acknowledged though that environmentally friendly replacement equipment in our industry is extremely expensive. We urge the Government of B.C. to assist the heavy construction industry in acquiring new equipment that incorporates innovative greenhouse gas reduction technology."* (B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association).

PRODUCT PACKAGING

A common irritant that the public identified in both written and on-line submissions concerned the excessive packaging of consumer products. Specifically, we heard requests for the government to consider providing incentives to encourage businesses to adopt biodegradable packaging. We also received several submissions calling on the government to implement a tax on plastic bags. Here is a sample of the submissions we received.

> *"We should require the reduction or elimination of wasteful packaging and require companies to take back and recycle their waste."* (Maryann Emery and Rob Wilson, Golden).

> *"I would also like to see the province offer tax incentives to encourage businesses and manufacturers to reduce packaging. There is too much packaging, and it results in too much garbage."* (Tara Owens, Victoria).

> *"A broadening of the current policy of deposits on containers to encourage recycling or safe disposal would be useful. Ideally, all containers used by consumers should be recyclable. At the same time, incentives to industry to reduce packaging from its current levels must be applied."* (Robert Sibbald, Chilliwack).

> *"The food industry and consumer packaging industry could be given incentives and/ or laws to produce biodegradable packaging, and packaging that uses less or no oil for production. The plastic waste is staggering!"* (Henry Warner, Coldstream).

INCENTIVES FOR ALTERNATIVE ENERGY RESEARCH AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

A recurring message in many of the submissions received by the Committee was the request for the government to create more incentives for the production of and research into sources of clean, renewable energy. In particular, we heard a strong demand for the government to expand funds available through the Innovative Clean Energy Fund, or some similar program, to develop alternative sources of energy such as wind, solar, and tidal power.

> *"We live in the Saudi Arabia of green energy solutions. We have abundant water and wind resources that are not being harvested, and we can do it in the most environmentally benign way. We have some of the world's best and brightest engineers and construction firms right here that have that ability."* (Plutonic Power Corp.).

> *"Provide tax incentives and research dollars to support the development and implementation of small scale green energy projects. For example, it may not make sense to implement solar energy on a large scale but what about supporting it on a house by house scale. If every new house created enough solar energy to reduce BC Hydro consumption by 1/3 this would make a difference over time."* (Mary Miller, Surrey).

PUBLIC TRANSIT TAX CREDIT

The Committee received numerous online submissions from individuals in the lower mainland who suggested the province offer a tax credit to partially offset the cost of public transit passes. Many of these submissions suggested the provincial government match the federal government's tax credit for users of public transit. We also heard requests from post-secondary student organizations that requested the government implement incentives to promote student public transit use.

Some of the comments we heard include:

> *"Students on a fixed income often depend on public transit to get to school. Time after time students tell me that the cost of transit is just too high and ask me why university students have a universal transit pass and pay almost a third of what college students currently pay… We recommend that a system of initiatives, including service expansion and fare reductions, be put in place to encourage and expand the use of public transit and curb reliance on personal automobiles."* (Students Union of Vancouver Community College).

> *"Providing people with real transportation alternatives to the automobile means developing a transit system that's more extensive, more efficient and more accessible than what's currently available… We recommend incentives such as fare reduction for students using public transit, and this would include increased funding to make the U-pass available to students across the lower mainland."* (Emily Carr Students' Union).

HYBRID VEHICLES

A recurring theme in the submissions, particularly those submissions made online, was that the government should do more to promote energy-efficient vehicles. Larger tax credits, rebates and even the elimination of taxes for hybrid and electric vehicles were ideas presented by many. Conversely, a number of online submissions expressed concern about the environmental impact of the batteries used in hybrid and electric cars. This debate is highlighted in some of the suggestions provided below:

> *"I think that any way that we can promote the use, acceptance or deployment of hybrid or electric vehicles is a step forward in meeting the huge challenge presented by global warming and our dependency on the finite resource of crude oil. To promote the use of hybrid and electric cars would it be viable to offer green incentives such as eliminating or reducing the GST and or PST on the purchase of these vehicles or by offering a small reduction in insurance costs?"* (David Eadie, Mission).

> *"The support for hybrid cars alone is small thinking. Recycling the hybrid car battery every five years and the cost to replace it is not environmentally sound in my view."* (Eric Moeller, Gabriola Island).

> *"Tax should be exempt from all hybrid vehicles to make them cost less than standard vehicles. The incentives are not enough. They have to be substantive."* (Herm Rudzow, North Vancouver).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

6. **consider programs or tax credits to encourage the production and consumption of environmentally-friendly products, including, but not limited to, solar power generation and geo-thermal heating and cooling.**
7. **provide additional resources and programs to promote locally-produced B.C. agricultural products and ensure that all British Columbians have access to nutritious food options.**
8. **increase British Columbia's contributions within federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements, such as the *Agricultural Policy Framework – Growing Forward* and the *Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Program.***
9. **provide educational and additional resources to agricultural enterprises engaged in direct farm gate or "not for re-sale" operations to assist them to improve the quality and safety of their slaughter and product handling, including the facilitation of more licensed abattoirs.**
10. **work with industry to develop a technology development centre for research into food processing and bio-products production.**
11. **consider incentives and policies to encourage research into and production of biofuels and a B.C.-based, competitive biofuel manufacturing industry.**
12. **work with the B.C. Trucking Association to examine possible grant, rebate, or loan programs, to encourage the adoption of the EnviroTruck program.**
13. **consider measures that would promote green packaging for consumer goods. The government may also wish to examine the feasibility of penalties for the use of non-biodegradable packaging and overpackaging.**

DISCOURAGING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Question 3: What tax changes would you make to discourage British Columbians from activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions?

The Finance Committee received close to 500 on-line submissions asking the government to introduce some form of carbon tax. In addition, we received approximately 250 additional on-line submissions — primarily from urban residents — calling on the government to increase fuel taxes to offset increased expenditures for rapid transit. Conversely, we received fewer submissions in support of the cap-and-trade model to reduce emissions.

However, we also observed a clear frustration from numerous respondents living outside the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island that additional revenues collected from gas taxes and surtaxes on so-called luxury vehicles would unfairly penalize those living in rural or remote communities without access to public transit and where travelling great distances for work, services, or pleasure is the norm.

As a Committee, we urge the government to choose the carrot over the stick and use tax penalties only when positive incentives have failed to alter behaviour in a significant manner.

Nonetheless, the Minister of Finance has indicated that all options — including increased taxes and possible tax shifting are "on the table" for discussion. To this end, we reviewed the comments the committee received on various tax changes to discourage British Columbians from activities that contribute to greenhouse gases.

CARBON TAX

The Finance Committee received numerous submissions calling for the creation of a carbon tax, or what some environmental organizations refer to as a "climate change levy." Those in favour of a carbon tax noted its potential to affect people's choices in the marketplace. Advocates for this position argue that, over time, both business and consumers will respond to the rising prices of carbon-intensive goods and services by increasing their demand for innovative, environmentally friendly alternatives. Requests for a carbon tax ranged from under $30 to $50 per tonne of CO_2, with the rate increasing over time.

Many of these submissions expressed support for a revenue-neutral carbon tax, where increased revenues from a carbon tax would be offset by lowering other taxes, such as income tax. Other submissions in favour of a carbon tax suggested that revenues be directed towards public transit or alternative energy projects. Here is some of the support we heard.

> *"A well-designed, revenue-neutral carbon tax, introduced at a low level and explicitly scheduled to rise over time, provides the best incentive to start making adjustments in our lifestyle choices now. It also provides a strong and reliable signal to B.C. businesses and entrepreneurs that there is a whole range of economic opportunities expanding or being created."* (Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter).

> *"The main criticism against the carbon tax is that it is a political non-starter because no one is willing to vote for more taxes. This is a red herring. In a revenue-neutral carbon tax, where increased revenues brought in by the carbon tax are offset by tax cuts and rebates in corporate and personal income taxes, the average British Columbian will not be any worse off in terms of their income."* (Voters Taking Action on Climate Change)

> *"I believe phasing in a carbon tax will give people both a monetary incentive and the time to change their lifestyle. With the foreknowledge that carbon-intensive activities will continue to become more expensive,*

> *businesses and individuals will become adequately motivated to make greener choices."* (Justin Tilson, Vancouver).

However, several people expressed concerns about the creation of a carbon tax. A common request was to provide viable alternatives to carbon-intensive activities and products, especially in the area of public transportation, before creating penalties. Some submissions also indicated that punitive measures are unlikely to change behaviour and recommended the province focus on incentives and education.

Another concern raised in the submissions was the issues of equity and fairness of a carbon tax. The committee heard that if a carbon tax is applied across the board, there would be a negative impact on particular groups, such as low-income earners, rural British Columbians and those without access to public transportation. This might be avoided with some form of tax shifting. Below are some of the concerns we heard.

> *"By themselves many green taxes would have a regressive distributional impact. Green taxes should move forward, but they need to be offset by income transfers to the least well-off, public spending on transit, etc, in order to heed off a regressive impact. Just as progressive taxation is based on the ability to pay, so should the climate change plan."* (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).
>
> *"Using taxes as penalties, in our view, requires considerably more discussions as new environmental standards are established that potentially put some industries and their workers and families at risk."* (Richmond Chamber of Commerce).
>
> *"People need alternatives before they are punished for their lifestyles. Once there are greener choices available then start thinking about discouraging bad habits."* (Andy Notman, Chilliwack).

CARBON TRADING

A model to address greenhouse gases, put forward in some of the submissions received by the Committee, was for the government to create a clearinghouse for carbon credits for both individuals and small business or join existing national and international trading programs. Under the cap-and-trade model, the province would set a hard cap on greenhouse gas emissions, and then and issue tradeable allowances that grant businesses the right to emit a set amount. Businesses able to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions allocated under the cap would then be able to sell their extra allowances to businesses in which technological upgrades would be too costly or too disruptive. The cap-and-trade model has widespread support from other jurisdictions and is currently being considered in British Columbia. Below are some of the suggestions we received on this topic:

> *"British Columbia should facilitate and promote a provincially-based carbon offset program that individuals can use to offset their emissions, and offset B.C. government emissions through the program. It should put in place a cap and trade system for industry and for municipalities in coordination with California and/or other provinces or states."* (Dr. Lynda Gagné, Victoria).
>
> *"I support the marketability of carbon trading to let "market forces" reduce greenhouse gas production."* (Eve Layman Kelowna).

Committee members believe that British Columbia should become the North American leader in promoting the cap-and-trade model to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We encourage the government to not only to be a participant in the project, but to take steps to develop the expertise to be home to an international clearinghouse for carbon trading.

FUEL TAX

In addition to responses on a general carbon tax, we received numerous submissions focused on increasing the provincial fuel tax. Submissions on this topic ranged from those in support of significantly raising fuel taxes, to those strongly against any increases in taxation. While submissions both for and against higher gas taxes were distributed across the province, the vast majority of submissions calling for a gas tax hike originated from Metro Vancouver. Conversely, many submissions from the interior of the province indicated that the government should not increase the gas taxes. This debate highlights the difficulty this Committee has in proposing a simple "one size fits all" recommendation to government:

> *"Raise gas taxes and increase spending on rapid transit."* (James Bjerring, Vancouver).
>
> *"Higher fuel taxes with the increased revenue going to subsidize greener forms or transportation and other green initiatives."* (Stephen Drozdik, Vancouver).
>
> *"It would not be fair to tax people in areas of B.C. where SUVs and trucks are the safer mode of transportation in the winter as the roads are often treacherous."* (Donna Jarvis, Lone Butte).
>
> *"We need lower taxes, not more on every pretext. I can appreciate urban areas needing to reduce traffic, but why are government programs always so punitive on those of us who live beyond Hope? Reduce fuel taxes for us in the north where public transit is not an option."* (Peter Guenther, Vanderhoof).

FUEL-INEFFICIENT VEHICLES

Another recurring theme that emerged was for increased levies or feebates applicable on fuel-inefficient vehicles. The feebate policy would set an engine efficiency level at a certain number of litres per hundred kilometers, charging a penalty for each litre above the efficiency standard and providing a rebate for every litre below the efficiency standard.

We received some submissions that indicated that all non fuel-efficient vehicles should be charged an environmental levy on purchase. However, we also received several submissions from rural British Columbia indicating that additional levies and taxes on work vehicles would place an added cost burden for needed vehicles.

> *"There should be substantial taxes on inefficient vehicles. Money from those taxes should go directly to subsidize the costs of purchasing more efficient vehicles."* (Dory Sheldan, Vancouver).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the government:

14. **consider participating in a carbon trading system that benefits B.C. businesses and taxpayers.**
15. **consider new taxes to discourage activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions as a second choice to incentive-based programs.**
16. **should it choose a carbon tax, it should take measures to mitigate the impacts of such a tax on lower and middle-income families.**
17. **recognize there is a clear urban/rural divide with respect to increases to transportation-related taxation.**

SUSTAINING HEALTH CARE

> *Question 4: Public health care is an important priority but growing costs and demand are a challenge. Since 2001, health care spending has increased 49 percent, from $8.8 billion to $13.1 billion. As a share of government ministry spending, health costs continue to crowd out other spending options. It increased from 28 percent of the budget in 1985, to 34 percent in 1995, and now stands at more than 44 percent.*
>
> *What budget choices would you make to sustain health care while balancing the need to invest in other areas like education and community programs?*

The fourth question contained in this year's budget consultation questionnaire asked British Columbians to put forward their suggestions for how to make the health care system sustainable for future generations.

The Committee was surprised and concerned by how few recommendations the public made on this topic. Many of the submissions we received suggested simply spending more money, leaving the impression that the general public may believe their collective capacity to pay taxes to continue increasing the health care budget is unlimited.

Nonetheless, some good ideas emerged, such as calls for the government to promote healthy living; increased taxation on unhealthy products; an expanded role for primary care and home care services to reduce demand for acute and complex care; user fees for health care services; and calls for a greater role for the private sector. Issues pertaining to mental health programs are also presented.

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING

A recurring theme was the need to promote healthier lifestyles and the committee readily acknowledges this is a sustainability issue. We received several submissions supportive of the government's ActNow BC campaign as a means to promote physical activity and healthy eating. Many submissions encouraged the government to consider further expansion of programs such as the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and other programs to make B.C. schools centres for healthy living and behavioural change. Here are some of the comments we received:

> *"I can see no better image than our young people in our schools crunching on an apple, a cucumber, a tomato that's grown in B.C. It's promoting B.C. product. It's educating a new generation of healthy eaters and supporters of what B.C. has to offer."* (Joe Sardinha, British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association).
>
> *"We need to empower children between K and 12 with some basic health information and really get them motivated as empowered health care consumers."* (British Columbia College of Chiropractors and British Columbia Chiropractic Association).

Building upon this theme, we received many submissions proposing tax incentives to encourage physical activity and healthy eating habits. In particular, witnesses suggested tax credits for fitness programs, gym memberships, and sports, as well as removing taxes on healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables. These are some of the suggestions we heard:

> *"The implementation of a provincial children's fitness tax credit and a national adult fitness tax credit will support cross-ministry initiatives associated with ActNow B.C. while supporting B.C.'s mission of leading the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness."* (Fitness Industry Council of Canada).
>
> *"Believe it or not, health care is also a major issue for our chamber members in order to attract and retain people in the north. …A little tax incentive or some form of incentive to get businesses to take that health*

> *program is good prevention. We believe that will help reduce, in the long term, some of our health care budget."* (Prince George Chamber of Commerce).
>
> *"The federal tax write-off of kids' activities should be increased and extended to adults."* (Trevor Kinley, Invermere).

TAXATION ON UNHEALTHY PRODUCTS

A related theme identified by witnesses was increased taxation of unhealthy products. Many on-line submissions specified that the government should consider significant taxation on "junk foods," tobacco and alcohol products as a behavioral disincentive.

For example, in a written submission to the Committee, the British Columbia Healthy Living Alliance suggested to the Committee that the government consider "decreasing the appeal of unhealthy foods by increasing their cost through tax disincentives and regulating advertising to children." That organization also advised the Committee that government should increase the tobacco tax in order to offset the costs of nicotine-cessation initiatives. The message was also repeated often in the on-line submissions the Committee received.

The following are typical of submissions received on this topic.

> *"The province has already developed excellent "Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools" that outline the types of foods that are "not recommended" due to their low nutritional value and high calorie content. We recommend that the Government use the existing "Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools" as criteria for determining the types of food that are taxed."* (British Columbia Healthy Living Alliance).
>
> *"We urge the Committee to recommend to government that it increase tobacco taxes, and close the roll-your-own tobacco tax loophole. Higher tobacco taxes are an extremely effective way to reduce smoking, especially among youth who are particularly price-sensitive."* (Canadian Cancer Society, B.C. and Yukon Division).
>
> *"Add a junk food tax to create more funds that could directly be put into health care."* (Dermot Hikisch, Telkwa).

The Committee also received an informative presentation from the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall and the head of the Centre for Addictions Research of B.C., Dr. Tim Stockwell. Their presentation noted that alcohol abuse costs British Columbia $2.2 billion per year, and results in 1,200 premature deaths and 25,000 hospitalisations per year.

Of particular concern to the witnesses was the fact that British Columbia's current taxation policies on beverage alcohol provide preferential treatment to higher alcohol content products. The witnesses believed that the government should revise the current alcohol taxation policy to encourage the consumption of lower alcohol content drinks. To ensure that the change is revenue neutral, products with higher alcohol content would be taxed at a higher rate. The witnesses also suggested that the taxation levels should be linked to the consumer price index.

The witnesses also referenced a successful Australian program in which a "nickel-a-drink" harm reduction levy was used to fund new addiction treatment and prevention programs. Based on 2005/06 sales volume, such a levy would raise an additional $88 million per year. A similar program is already in place in Quebec.

The witnesses' overall message is presented below:

> *A fundamental suggestion is that tax rates should take account of the health, social and economic costs of the product. This is no ordinary product. We know that even heavy use and particularly related harms at the population level are strongly influenced by price. The main thrust of my point today is that the way alcohol is priced through the liquor stores actually gives more incentives for people to choose higher alcohol-content drinks than lower alcohol-content drinks.* (Centre for Addictions Research of B.C.).

PRIMARY CARE

Another common theme the Committee heard pertaining to the sustainability of the health care system was the need for innovation to permit other health care professionals to work in a multi-disciplinary approach to primary care. For example, we heard calls to develop a funding mechanism to permit physicians, pharmacists, registered nurses, dieticians and physiotherapists to work together under one roof to enhance patient care and reduce the demand for emergency visits and for acute care.

Submissions to the Committee suggested that the role and number of primary care clinics should be expanded to provide faster and more responsive service, while decreasing demands on emergency rooms. Here are some of the comments we heard.

> *"Primary care is where we need to meet most of the challenges of our aging population head on, and we're not really structured yet to do this properly. As a primary care physician myself, I am continually frustrated by an inability to incorporate other health care professionals within my practice. There are simply no mechanisms set up as yet to fund or pay these professionals to work with my patients and me, despite really good evidence that it works."* (British Columbia Medical Association).

> *"Develop health care clinics with doctors, nurses, specialists and or health care workers working in groups together to solve health problems where patients are encouraged to exercise, to quit smoking, to stop drinking excessively, to lead healthy life styles, to maintain a healthy weight and to eat healthy food."* (Muriel Walton, Castlegar).

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

A common theme heard in our on-line submissions was the need for additional physicians and nurses practicing in communities outside the lower mainland. We received several submissions indicating that physicians and nurses are much more likely to settle in the communities in which they receive their training. Below are some of the comments we received on this topic.

> *"An example relevant to the community that we find ourselves in today — the medical school expansion in Kelowna. Eight years ago this was just a good idea. Today the buildings have been constructed, the programs are in place, and only days ago we marked the full doubling of the first-year medical class, to 256 students. Now we look forward to the next phase of that initiative."* (University Presidents Council).

> *"The northern medical program (encourages) doctors who get trained in areas tend to stay. The 70-70 figure is that 70 percent of doctors practise within 70 kilometres of where they are trained."* (University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association).

While the Committee commends the government for dramatically increasing the number of health care professionals being trained in British Columbia, we believe that it is our role to hold the government accountable to its commitment to expand physician training spaces at the University of British Columbia –

Okanagan campus. It is also the Committee's opinion that the government ought to enable B.C.'s colleges to graduate additional nurses in places like Smithers, Cranbrook, and Williams Lake.

HOME CARE

We received submissions from many health care workers and residents in support of enhanced home care for seniors. Several people indicated that home support is far less expensive than 24-hour support in seniors' complex care facilities. Health care workers pointed out that increased home support would help seniors to lead healthier, more independent lives, and therefore alleviate pressures on acute care and complex care systems. The suggestion is that British Columbia use home care as a strategy to reduce the time seniors spend in acute health care facilities and delay their entry into complex care facilities. Below are some of the comments we heard on this topic.

> *"Home care for seniors can reduce costs to our hospital system by reducing both illnesses and injuries."* (Steve Cooley, Vanderhoof).
>
> *"For example, the use of home care aids for seniors and people with disabilities is essential to basic health care."* (Leslie Benisz, Vancouver).
>
> *"Increase home care options for the elderly."* (John-David Gray, Langley).

USER FEES

We received close to 200 submissions advocating nominal user fees to be charged for health care services. These submissions indicated that user fees will help discourage abuse of the system, generate revenue to pay for health care and show health care consumers the cost of their interaction with the system. However, we also heard concerns about the impact of fees on low income residents, particularly seniors.

> *"Impose a small user fee for visits to family physicians and also a small fee for every days stay in the hospital. Maybe also introduce a means test so that the needy people are not penalized."* (John Hira, Langley).
>
> *"Charge a minimal user fee for each doctor appointment to discourage frivolous use of the health care system. Fees are refundable at income tax filing if the appointments are made for particular criteria (i.e. pregnancy, post child-birth, or a long-term illness) and the appointments are approved and verified by the attending doctor."* (Dan and Joanne Loan, Coquitlam).
>
> *"I would like to see a user fee initiated for hospital and clinic visits based on income. I believe that this would help discourage wasteful use of our health care system. For example, children and seniors would be free of a user charge and working adults would pay based on their previous years' tax bracket. I would not mind paying 50 dollars to go the clinic for a check up as I believe it would prevent others from going to the hospital or clinic for no reason."* (Nolan Steinwand, Fort St. John).

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT

We also received submissions asking for an expanded private sector role for the delivery of health care services. A number of individuals and organizations suggested that private health care providers could ease pressure on the public system. However some witnesses expressed concern about the impact on low-income residents, while others doubted the benefits of private health care providers. This debate is highlighted in the sample of responses provided below.

"Our governments should consider opening the health care system to more competition, particularly for our centrally planned hospitals. The Board of Trade believes that experimentation with fee-for-service within the context of a publicly funded system and alternative models of service delivery could result in performance improvements and yield cost savings. Canada is the only developed country where the private sector is not involved as an alternative or in conjunction with the public system." (Vancouver Board of Trade).

"Perhaps not a budget item, but the federal government needs to be pressured to amend the Canada Health Act to allow for private delivery of publicly funded health care and to permit citizens to buy personal health care insurance. We already have a multi-tiered health care system. It's about time we stopped denying it. B.C. could be a leader on this." (John Newell, Halfmoon Bay).

"I believe that health care can best be funded by putting more private sector dollars into the system. (Stew Daroux, Cranbrook).

"Maintain the public system, discourage or eliminate the private system." (Chris Joseph, Squamish).

MENTAL HEALTH

As in previous years, several organizations and individuals presenting to the Committee requested increased support for mental health services. Witnesses suggested that the lack of mental health services contribute to higher health care costs and add to homelessness in urban areas. Here is a sample of what the Committee heard.

"The estimated annual cost of a mental illness for the Canadian business community is about $10 billion in lost productive time and other associated costs. Some 86 percent of the hospital admissions for mental illness don't happen in a mental health facility. They happen in just your local hospital, which means beds that you would have thought would be treating other kinds of illnesses are being tied up by mental health clients." (Canadian Mental Health Association – Kamloops Division).

"Mental health is also a huge but overlooked factor in the ills of our society. We spend vast sums on physical health, but relatively little on mental health. Instead, the mentally ill are left to roam the streets and either be victimized or victimize others through crime. They turn to drugs because they have low self-esteem or addictive personalities or have been abused. It is the criminal justice system that ends up trying to clean up the mess - with little effect, because criminalizing the mentally ill does not solve their, or our, problems. (Melody Postle, Maple Ridge).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

18. increase efforts to inform British Columbians about the changes to the delivery of health care services that will ensure the sustainability of the system into the future.
19. consider, through ActNowBC, increased investments in public education campaigns and programs such as B.C. School Fruit and Vegetables in School, to inform British Columbians about healthy lifestyle choices.
20. review the viability of providing fitness tax credits for children, students, and seniors— mirroring the Government of Canada's Children's Fitness Tax Credit.
21. consider increases to taxation on tobacco to discourage use.
22. consider the use of tax policy to encourage sales of lower alcohol content beverages and promote a general reduction in alcohol consumption.
23. remove the tax exemptions provided to "candies and confections" under the Social Services Tax Act.
24. continue to invest in the creation of primary care throughout the province as a means to relieve hospital emergency and acute care wards and as a means to keep people better informed and healthier.
25. consider bolstering resources available for seniors home support to prevent seniors from having to access emergency, acute care and complex care.
26. fund the physician training program at the University of British Columbia – Okanagan, and fund regional community colleges to provide the full Registered Nurse program.

HOUSING BRITISH COLUMBIANS

> *Question 5: Last year, Balanced Budget 2007 provided an additional $476 million over four years towards housing supports for everyone from the homeless to homeowners. Are there other housing initiatives you would like us to consider?*

We observed strong differences of opinion concerning the government's investments in housing supports in the 2007 budget. We received many submissions calling for expanded social housing options and increased options to address homelessness — particularly in urban centres. However, we also received many submissions stating that the current level of investment in social housing programs is more than sufficient and that the private sector should provide affordable housing.

The Committee notes that during the consultation process, the government made commitments to provide $25 million to expand the hours of operations of homeless shelters and to expand the rental supplements pilot program. While these additional resources will go a long way to reducing some of the critical shortages in the housing area, the Committee believes that there are additional creative ways in which the government can increase the availability of affordable social housing.

SOCIAL HOUSING

A common area of concern raised in responses to Question 5 was that the government's investments in social housing do not appear to be making a dent in the availability of affordable housing stock or the ongoing issue of homelessness. A significant proportion suggested that the government should make greater investments in social housing. Conversely, the Committee also received many on-line submissions calling for the government to reduce spending on public housing because results of this expenditure were not apparent.

Here is an example of what we heard:

> *"Homelessness and housing affordability must remain a top issue. The market fails to build sufficient affordable housing for low- and middle-income families and for vulnerable populations, so public solutions are required."* (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives).

STANDARDS FOR SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

At our public hearing in Dawson Creek, Mayor Calvin Kruk requested that the provincial government play a larger role in ensuring subsidized housing is clean, safe, and accessible to low-income British Columbians. Mayor Kruk explained that some landlords of subsidized housing units do not maintain them to the proper standards. He urged government to ensure these standards are upheld by inspecting the units, and withholding cheques to landlords until the standards are met.

Below is what we heard on this topic.

> *"For us, it is important that the word "quality" is entered into consideration, that landlords' responsibility includes a commitment to the community and to the individual renting accommodation, that a standard must be realized and that it is no longer acceptable to allow living conditions to be sub par. A resolution endorsed at the Union of B.C. Municipalities included asking the provincial government to ensure that standards are met prior to sending a cheque to any landlord."* (Mayor Calvin Kruk, City of Dawson Creek).

> *"I would like some regulations requiring landlords to keep rental properties up to certain standards. I know of some places where the housing has been allowed to deteriorate to slum conditions and tenants have little choice because house prices have skyrocketed so as to be unaffordable."* (Jacque Ahlm, Williams Lake).

The Committee believes that individuals and families with low or moderate incomes should have access to affordable housing. We also believe that the government has an important role to play in ensuring that landlords comply with the provincial accommodation standards.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCY ACT

While in Cranbrook, the Committee heard a presentation from Andrea Goertzen, a local reporter with the *Fernie Free Press.* Ms. Goertzen conveyed to the Committee a sense of frustration over a news story she was working on detailing recent tenant evictions in Fernie.

The tenants were evicted legally; however, Ms Goertzen informed the Committee the property owner, using the existing legislation, intends to create a *de facto* strata development without going through the customary permitting process with local government. The proposal is to sell long-term leases at the conclusion of the renovation project which has the same impact as outright sales of condominium units within the former rental apartment buildings. The Committee believes that local government should have the opportunity to review this type of housing conversion. Here is what we heard from Ms. Goertzen's presentation:

> *"I know I don't need to tell any of you about the housing crisis that we're facing across the province, but what I can tell you about is how it's affecting my community and many long-term residents of my community — the most vulnerable residents in the community. With the owners of two low-income apartment complexes recently evicting our most vulnerable citizens and a zero-percent vacancy rate in Fernie, our community is faced for the first time with the possibility of approximately 30 people being homeless come October 31."* (Andrea Goertzen, Cranbrook).

HOUSING CO-OPS FOR DISABLED ADULTS

A message we heard from the Kamloops Society for Community Living was the desire for more funding to be directed towards housing co-ops for disabled adults. The Society explained that group homes require far more funding and 24-hour care, whereas many people with disabilities do not need such a level of care.

The witness suggested that government consider promoting a co-operative housing model to permit disabled individuals to own their own homes. The benefit of co-op housing is that it would permit individuals to pool their resources to acquire suitable accommodations with an appropriate level of care. Here's what we heard.

> *"There is no doubt in my mind that there is financial benefit to setting up a housing co-operative for persons with a disability. The goal of owning your own home gives every person the incentive to be employed."* (Kamloops Society for Community Living).

PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX

Whereas in previous years criticism concerning the property transfer tax (PTT) and its ramifications for first-time home buyers was primarily relayed to the Committee by realtors, this year the Committee heard loud calls from the public at large for the government to eliminate this tax, or at least, revisit the threshold levels for first-time homebuyers. This is an issue primarily of concern to residents of greater Vancouver and greater Victoria, who have experienced significant escalations in housing prices. Some of the comments we heard are included below.

"Home-ownership still remains firmly out of reach for people in the Fraser Valley. Local governments need help providing affordable housing options. We recommend adjusting the PTT exemption threshold annually to reflect changes in the consumer price, and to eventually eliminate the PTT altogether." (Fraser Valley Real Estate Board).

"The B.C. government should amend the property transfer tax (PTT) to charge 1 percent of the first $375,000 of the purchase price of a home and 2 percent on the remaining balance. The government should also create legislation linking those 1- and 2-percent tax tiers to the first-time buyer exemption level, so that if that exemption level is increased, the 2-percent tier then also kicks in at that higher exemption rate. We would also like to ensure that move-up buyers are required to only pay the property transfer tax on the difference between the price of the house they sell and the price of the house they purchase." (Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

27. **develop a long-term action plan to address homelessness; ensuring that the long-term action plan has a particular focus on those suffering from a mental health affliction or an addiction, aboriginal people, and women.**
28. **take steps, in concert with local government and the federal government, to facilitate the creation of affordable housing for those British Columbians earning low and moderate incomes.**
29. **review the *Residential Tenancy Act* and other relevant legislation to ensure that local municipalities have the authority to review and permit the conversion of rental properties to strata-like developments, including leases of longer than 20 years.**
30. **continue to review the thresholds for the property transfer tax, including raising the exemption level provided for first-time homebuyers.**

OTHER BUDGET PRIORITIES

Question 6: What are your other comments regarding your choices for Balanced Budget 2008?

As we noted at the outset of this report, the vast majority of witnesses appearing before the Finance Committee at our public hearings made presentations on topics other than climate change, sustaining health care, and housing British Columbians. For example, we heard impassioned calls for the government to review funding levels for the arts; co-ordinated presentations by associations representing the interests of B.C.'s post-secondary education sector; and additional funding requests by those providing child care services.

Throughout the consultation process, committee members also took note of several interesting proposals that may have considerable benefit to local communities or sectors. While these proposals may lack the broad appeal of calls for decreased income taxes or increased program spending, we believe that these ideas are worthy of consideration by government. These proposals include additional funding for restorative justice programs; a review of programs to bolster immigration; on-going monitoring of British Columbia's tax environment; and other proposals to ensure economic competitiveness.

ARTS FUNDING

Echoing the submissions we received last year, the arts community again showed up in full force to our public hearings throughout the province. In each of the 14 communities we visited, the Committee received an overview from local arts councils detailing the positive impacts the arts plays in both urban centres and smaller communities. At our Victoria hearing, we received a brief from Arts Future BC, outlining the role the arts play in enhancing education, promoting health and healing, creating connections and communities, and enhancing the economy.

It was the opinion of most witnesses appearing before the Committee on this topic that government should substantially increase funding through the B.C. Arts Council. This view is summarized in the following statement:

> *"The role of the British Columbia Arts Council is to assist the arts and cultural community to achieve its creative, social and economic potential and it ensures that all British Columbians are able to participate in a healthy arts and cultural community recognized for its excellence. The BC Arts Council is the only stable source of direct, on-going, long-term, sustained core funding for arts organizations, museums, performing arts companies, and community arts councils on behalf of the government and people of British Columbia."* (Arts Future BC).

Presentations on this topic typically used current funding levels provided to the B.C. Arts Council as the basis for the claim that British Columbia is seventh in Canada for per capita funding of the arts. When prompted to explain this current level of expenditure, the witnesses acknowledged that there are also other sources of one-time funding available for community-based arts and culture events. However, the Committee is unsure of the total funding for arts in B.C. and suggests the government make that determination so that accurate inter-provincial comparisons are possible.

This Committee strongly believes that arts and culture activities should receive sufficient per capita funding — particularly in light of the approaching 150th anniversary of B.C.'s founding as a Crown colony and the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

Some of the comments we received on this topic are highlighted below.

> *"Arts organizations are expending huge amounts of time and human energy applying for often elusive and even peripheral grants, seeking alternate funding sources and engaging in endless activities that have nothing whatsoever to do with providing our community with the arts. This is all just to keep our doors open. With adequate means we could better get on with our jobs."* (Community Arts Council of Prince George and District).
>
> *"Those of us working in the arts and experiencing the day-to-day joy and excitement know that arts help create connections and assist in building stronger communities, contribute to our economic strength and foster employment. We are also well aware that the arts stimulate discussion and creative thinking and promote health and well-being."* (Kamloops Art Gallery).
>
> *"I firmly believe that the more an individual person participates in the arts, the more they understand themselves, the more they are tolerant of other cultures, the more they understand other people and languages, the more connected they are to history, and the more they feel they belong and have value in the community. When a person is connected in that way, they are also more fully and meaningfully contributing to society."* (Arts Council of Surrey).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

31. **consider additional funding to the B.C. Arts Council and to all British Columbia's artists and cultural organizations such that B.C.'s total arts funding from all government sources is not less than third highest amongst the Canadian provinces. Furthermore, government should ensure that arts funding is equitably distributed to rural and isolated artists and to the multicultural community.**

CHILD CARE

The Committee heard in most communities visited that families are desperate for more child care spaces. From the Prince George Chamber of Commerce we heard there is a business case for government to help create more child care spaces in British Columbia. Specifically, we learned of the difficulty small business has in attracting and retaining workers due to a lack of child care spaces. We note that the Prince George Chamber of Commerce has stated in the past that the current subsidy program is cumbersome, and that the Federal Child Care Benefit provides an inadequate level of financial assistance for families to offset the costs of child care.

Other organizations appearing before the Committee also raised significant concerns over the economic impact the shortage of affordable, quality child care is having on local businesses and parents. Here is a sample of what we heard on this topic.

> *"Child care is still a top priority."* (Prince George Chamber of Commerce).
>
> *"For B.C. parents, particularly mothers, lack of access to affordable child care is still the biggest barrier they face in getting or staying in a job. Wait times for licensed care are years, not months, long."* (Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.).
>
> *"Giving all mothers options makes sense for women and for society as a whole, especially with forecasts of labour shortages and our commitment in BC to continuing to push for equality in the workplace."* (British Columbia Government Employees' Union).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

32. c complete an inventory of the waitlists for child care spaces in B.C. and identify the financial impacts on the provincial economy of the delays in obtaining child care services by families and take action to meet the demand.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – STAFF RETENTION

The issue of recruitment and staff retention of early childhood educators was prominent in many of the submissions to the Committee. In particular, several witnesses expressed a need for additional funding to increase the salaries and benefits provided to early childhood educators.

The Committee believes that the government should look at creative solutions to addressing staff retention issues in this field. We believe that offering student loan relief for those practicing in the field after graduation. Another option, based on successful trades-training programs developed between high schools and colleges, would be to facilitate student opportunities to complete credits towards an early childhood education diploma.

Here are some of the different comments we received on this topic.

> *"We must address the issue of compensation for child care workers, as recruitment and retention problems are rampant throughout the province."* (First Call - BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition).

> *"Most of our staff are now going to the school districts to be teacher assistants and going to work for the city of Quesnel play groups and preschool programs because we cannot compete with the wages. We pay the staff through our parent fees, and because of that we are not able to pay union wages. The educators I have talked to in the community who have moved on have said that they will not come back into our field of work because they are not recognized like they are in a school district or working for different city of Quesnel areas."* (Child Care Resource & Referral Programs - New Focus Society).

> *"Please revisit wage enhancement programs to support centers in paying an equitable wage for the work that is done by early childhood educators."* (Cranbrook Early Childhood Development Committee).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

33. investigate options for addressing issues pertaining to staff recruitment in early childhood education, including additional resources to provide student loan relief, and salary subsidies for professionals in this field.

COMMUNITY LIVING BC

The Committee received many submissions from advocates for the developmentally disabled — through the B.C. Association of Community Living — requesting additional resources be provided to Community Living BC. The additional funding should be used to address service waitlists, support respite care, and child development programs. Their main message was as follows:

> *"The British Columbia Association for Community Living urges government to allocate the necessary funding required to meet the needs of the thousands of children and youth with special needs, adults with developmental disabilities and their families who are on waitlists for needed community living supports*

> *and services. Community Living British Columbia alone needs $54.8 million to address the needs of adults with developmental disabilities who are waiting for services in this year and next. In addition, thousands of children and youth with special needs are waitlisted for access to urgent therapy services, the infant development programs, supported child development programs and respite care. Families are in crisis.*
>
> *The waitlists for community living supports and services are simply unacceptable. Individuals and families are in crisis and need your support."* (B.C. Association for Community Living).

CONTRACTED COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES

The Committee also received several submissions from various agencies working in the community social services sector. We heard from the Federation of Child and Family Services of British Columbia and from other contracted agencies that additional resources are required within the Ministry of Children and Family Development's budget to specifically cover the inflationary costs of agency operational needs. For example, we heard the challenges faced by the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria in meeting non-funded cost pressures associated with transportation, insurance, employee benefits, and technology upgrades.

Below are some of the submissions we received on this topic.

> *"We have already initiated discussions with our local government contract managers to mutually identify which direct services will have to be scaled back in order for us to meet our rent, hydro and oil bills. We will be forced to provide less service for the existing dollars — this may take many forms: from reducing intakes in some programs, having staff provide fewer visits, or eliminating specific services altogether."* (Boys and Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria)
>
> *"Our study determined that in the past three years alone, inflation and other (cost) drivers have resulted in a close to 30 percent increase in operating in infrastructure costs... We recommend that $20 million be placed into the MCFD budget to specifically cover the inflationary costs on agency operation needs."* (Federation of Child and Family Services of B.C.).

Based on the presentations made, the Committee believes that there is a need for government to consider additional funding allocations to the contracted community social services sector to cover inflationary costs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

34. **provide increased resources to the contracted community social services sector to offset inflationary cost pressures.**

EARLY ASSESSMENT FUNDING

Last year, the Finance Committee made a strong recommendation for the government to "immediately allocate necessary resources to eliminate the waitlists for assessments of children and youth with special needs."

However, this fall, we heard from both the Nanaimo Child Development Centre Society and the B.C. Association of Child Development and Intervention that while the government did increase funding for services for children with special needs, there remains a waitlist of approximately 6,000 children and youth requiring access to early intervention and school-based therapy; infant development; and the supported child program. Here is what they had to say.

> *"We were delighted last year, when we received the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, that they had adopted two of our recommendations. The Committee actually recommended that the government immediately allocate necessary resources to eliminate the wait-lists for assessments of children and youth with special needs and, furthermore, that the government should provide funding for a comprehensive prescreening program for all children. The government chose not to follow the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in the allocation of funding for early intervention services in the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the year we're in now."* (British Columbia Association of Child Development and Intervention).

> *"In Nanaimo we serve about 2,000 kids a year, and right now we've got 400 children on the wait-list. For us to be able to reduce that wait-list to zero by 2010, we need about a million dollars a year. Across the province it would be a mere $25 million to $30 million to eradicate from the wait-list the 6,000 children who are on it today. We've been very patient and very polite so far — meeting with the minister and MLAs — but we'll have to do something else. We can't wait for the kids any longer. We'll have to step up the pressure in order to make sure those children are helped."* (Nanaimo Child Development Centre Society).

The Committee believes that reducing waitlists for early childhood interventions will provide significant savings in the future with respect to health, educational, social services, and correctional costs. We again urge the government to provide the resources necessary to eliminate this backlog.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

35. **allocate necessary resources to eliminate the waitlists for assessments of children and youth with special needs.**

FORESTRY

The Committee heard that the forest industry is suffering a "perfect storm" of negative factors — a high Canadian dollar, U.S. duties, and weak U.S. housing market — and that many mills are closing, some permanently. While mills in the central interior that have access to pine beetle wood are surviving and even prospering by selling high volumes of product to the U.S. market, it is clear that mills in the southern interior are facing financial hardships. The Committee is concerned that in the government's very legitimate effort to harvest a maximum amount of pine beetle wood, the industry in the southern interior may well disappear. Here is one example of what we heard.

> *"A bigger problem is that there are massive volumes available. No fault of anyone in the room but of a little critter called the mountain pine beetle. There are massive volumes available, and it's going to be there for two to three years, if their predictions on shelf life of this product are true. I seriously question whether the southern operators, whether it's Weyerhaeuser in Merritt, Tembec in Cranbrook, Pope and Talbot in Midway or you name it.... I don't think they can weather a two-year storm if something isn't done about this problem. I don't think they can do it."* (Tembec Forest Industries).

In Prince George and Quesnel, we heard submissions from the local chambers of commerce and municipal representatives of the need for the government to continue to invest economic diversification programs in areas hard hit by the pine beetle epidemic. We heard that in both Prince and Quesnel, new highway infrastructure, education facilities, and community infrastructure were being developed to adapt to the changing economic bases of these communities.

> *"We've seen a lot of economic development in the north from various sectors: the increase in mountain pine beetle harvest; a new mining development, as the previous speaker talked about; increased oil and gas exploration as well as increased tourism. They provide excellent opportunities to strengthen northern communities on numerous horizons."* (Central Interior Logging Association).
>
> *"Over several decades communities in northern B.C. such as Quesnel have added significant economic wealth to British Columbia. The region's main economic driver, the forest sector, is about to undergo significant and dramatic changes for a number of reasons, including the catastrophic mountain pine beetle epidemic. While a number of steps have been undertaken by government to help diversify the northern economies, we believe that these efforts should not only be continued but intensified in coming years."* (Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce).
>
> *"You're coming to ask us what we think the priorities should be in the 2008 budget, and I have only one request: to support our ability to keep our quality of life and, with it, our ability to continue wealth for all British Columbians."* (Mayor Nate Bello, City of Quesnel).

The Committee believes that the government should work closely with the federal government to ensure that forestry-dependent communities have access to necessary resources to diversify their economies.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

36. **consider establishing market pricing on a regional basis in the Interior so that the higher logging and harvesting costs in the southern, north-western and north-eastern regions are recognized and that these regions do not continue to be penalized by the increasing volume and decreasing quality of pine beetle wood in the central interior.**
37. **consider providing additional assistance directly to forestry-dependent communities to allow them to develop diversification strategies and to help mitigate the negative social impacts of the current, unprecedented downturn in the industry.**
38. **work closely with the federal government to develop a more comprehensive and coordinated response to the pine beetle epidemic.**

MINING

The Committee heard positive stories about the state of the mining industry in British Columbia. We learned that investment in exploration is up significantly. However, the development and construction of major new metal mines are a rarity and there is concern that not enough new mines are being permitted to exploit the current super cycle in world mineral demand.

The industry highlighted the uncertainty that has arisen concerning the government's policies on consultation and engagement with First Nations communities. The industry expressed a desire for the government to address issues that would encourage companies to build a stronger relationship with First Nations and the need for government to encourage First Nations to support mine development by resolving the issue of revenue sharing. Here is a presentation we heard on this topic:

> *"The Mining Association of British Columbia encourages the establishment of a Mineral Tax Credit equal to 50 percent of the costs of pre-production community and First Nations consultation as well as environmental impact study costs. This policy change would assist the provincial Government in respect to*

> *the "New Relationship" with First Nations by helping to increase and improve the dialogue between industry and Aboriginals."* (Mining Association of British Columbia).

Another suggestion we heard was for government to direct an additional $25 million to Geoscience BC in conjunction with diversification strategies for interior communities impacted by the pine beetle. Here is the proposal.

> *"Based on global investments in geoscience, we would like to encourage you to consider topping up another $25 million into that fund because it's a very wise use of funds. We have 850 mineral exploration companies based in Vancouver, and less than 10 percent of those are active in Canada. We'd like to see more of those companies investing in Canada. My passion is to invest in B.C., so I want to see more investment back to B.C. Geoscience, again, will deliver those types of results."* (Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

39. **consider creating a Mineral Tax Credit equal to 50 percent of the costs of pre-production.**
40. **establish a clear policy on the sharing of government revenues from new mines with affected First Nations.**
41. **consider the measurable benefits of additional investment in Geoscience BC.**

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

As we have indicated in previous sections, this Committee strongly believes that B.C.'s environmental goals can only be met if the government continues to make strategic investments in infrastructure that will ensure a strong and vibrant economy. We are satisfied that the Gateway Program is crucial to the economies of British Columbia and Canada.

Nonetheless, the Committee recognizes that we received hundreds of submissions from residents of the City of Vancouver who almost-unanimously advocated against the Gateway Program — particularly the proposed twinning of the Port Mann Bridge. Conversely, we also heard from residents living on the south side of the Fraser River demanding the Port Mann Bridge be twinned, coupled with enhanced transit options for regions south of the Fraser River.

Below is a sample of the debate concerning highway projects in the greater Vancouver.

> *"Twin the Port Mann Bridge ASAP including provisions for transit to operate on an efficient time table which allows people to link up with existing and expanded transit infrastructure so they can actually reach a destination."* (Willard Wilton Surrey).

> *"While I agree with twinning the Port Mann and the HOV lane to 200th St, we ALSO need Rail/Rapid Transit to complement the highway system."* (Harry Yates, Langley).

> *"Stop and reconsider all mega-projects currently planned. Significantly, the "Gateway" project (highway construction and widening) will contribute enormously to BC's greenhouse gas emissions both during construction and on an ongoing basis."* (Tannis Braithwaite, Vancouver).

> *"Nothing is more important that reducing greenhouse gases than the immediate cancellation of the Gateway project. Increasing traffic flow across the Port Mann bridge will encourage the development of suburban living and a commuter lifestyle.* (Aaron Barsky, Vancouver).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

42. continue to make strategic investments in transportation infrastructure projects that are crucial to the economy of British Columbia and Canada, such as the Asia Pacific Gateway Program.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The various student unions, under the guidance of the Canadian Federation of Students, made four requests to reduce the cost of post-secondary education. The students' concerns were largely echoed by the various faculty associations appearing before the Committee.

The student unions and faculty associations were well organized in presenting their case to the Committee. Their message was reiterated in nearly every community we visited. However, in reviewing the thousands of on-line and written responses, we received only ten submissions calling for an across-the-board reduction in tuition fees; one call for lower tuition for trades training, and one submission calling for lower tuition for students studying to work within the medical profession. While the student unions often cited a survey indicating that "a 10-percent reduction in tuition fees is an investment supported by 80 percent of British Columbians," clearly there are other fiscal priorities that require attention as well.

Nonetheless, the Finance Committee recognizes the important contributions made to the economy by B.C.'s colleges and universities and the Committee is also concerned that the cost of post-secondary education in B.C. not be higher than third among the Canadian provinces. Below, we review some of the suggestions we received concerning post-secondary education in British Columbia.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION COSTS

A familiar theme running through the submissions made by the students unions and faculty associations was that the costs associated with attaining a post-secondary education are becoming an obstacle for a significant portion of the population. Such costs not only include tuition but also room and board, fees charged by universities, and textbooks. To address these costs, organizations appearing before the Committee called for a 10 percent reduction in tuition fees, and funding to provide students with upfront, non-repayable grants. These suggestions made to the Committee are highlighted below.

> *"In total, today we have four recommendations for the post-secondary system. Students are seeking a 10-percent reduction in tuition fees, an investment supported by 80 percent of British Columbians. We are seeking an additional $100 million in non-repayable student financial assistance to reduce student debt, as 87 percent of British Columbians support greater funding for grants. We are seeking the elimination of interest on student loans. And we are seeking an additional $200 million in operational funding."* (Canadian Federation of Students).

> *"In previous budget consultation the Canadian Federation of Students has asked for a 10-percent reduction in tuition fees. We support that call and believe that such a move would send a strong signal to existing and potential post-secondary students that B.C. is serious about supporting those interested in post-secondary education."* (Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of B.C.).

INTEREST ON STUDENT LOANS

The presentations by the student unions also highlighted a request for the government to review the interest rates charged on B.C. student loans. Currently, interest payable on student loans is — at the student's choice — either at a floating rate of prime plus 2.5 percent, or a fixed rate of prime plus 5 percent, where the prime lending rate is set by the Bank of Canada. We heard pleas from many students to reduce the interest rates charged to students entering the workforce, or to remove the interest charges entirely. The Committee agrees that many students are graduating with very large debts, high interest rates and are facing a very long wait before they can borrow for a vehicle, let alone a house or condominium.

> *"For a student with an average debt upon graduation, they're going to be paying about $400 per month for 9½ years before they'll finish paying off their student loan. In that time, the average student will have paid about $15,000 just in interest. That's $15,000 on top of the actual money they borrowed to go to post-secondary."* (North Island Students Union).

> *"A lesser-known fact is that student debt statistics leave out the interest paid on these loans. The B.C. government charges students between 3.5 percent and 6 percent in interest over its own cost of borrowing. If borrowing at a floating rate, students currently pay 8.5 percent per annum on floating loans and 11 percent per annum on fixed-rate loans. Incidentally, the interest on student loans is compounded daily… It is important for the government to send a signal to lower- and middle-income British Columbians that our colleges and universities are not restricted to wealthy British Columbians."* (Students' Union of Vancouver Community College).

OPERATING GRANTS

We also heard calls for the government to consider increased operating grants to B.C.'s universities and colleges. In large part, the province's college and university presidents asked government to relieve both inflationary pressures as well as to provide additional resources to enhance the quality of education for students. The university presidents and faculty associations also requested that the government continue to provide additional resources to bolster the number of students receiving graduate degrees from B.C. institutions, and recommended continued investments in university-based research programs.

> *"The B.C. Colleges need a new funding mechanism that, in addition to student tuition, ensures the costs of colleges' operations are fully funded. To maintain the current levels of programs and services, we need a five percent increase in base operating funding: this five percent increase is equivalent to approximately $22 million and accommodates inflationary increases to our operations that have not been funded in years"* (British Columbia College Presidents).

> *"The University Presidents' Council of British Columbia calls on the Government of British Columbia to establish a stable and predictable funding framework that will enable B.C.'s post-secondary institutions to support continues improvements in their respective teaching and learning environments. This should include recognition of real inflationary cost pressures faced by universities."* (University Presidents' Council of British Columbia).

STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We also heard concerns from both the student representatives and business organizations about the current level of student financial aid. The Committee supports the recommendation in the *Campus 2020 Report*, that government should initiate a comprehensive review of BC's student financial assistance program, including all fiscal programs intended to provide assistance to meet the cost of post-secondary education. Here are some of the comments we received on this topic.

> *"We would like to see better scholarship and grant programs to encourage postsecondary education."* (Certified Management Accountants of British Columbia).

> *"British Columbians are being denied access to proper post-secondary education due to financial restrictions. Students are willing to pay for their education, but require loans to cover the significant cost associated with getting the training they need, and to cover living costs while they are attending as a full-time student, as defined by the institutions. The current student loan system is inadequate to meet the needs of our population and the changing demographic of students choosing to return to school."* (B.C. Chamber of Commerce).

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Several witnesses appeared before the Committee to urge the government to support the recommendations in the *Campus 2020* report concerning university research and spaces for graduate students and graduate student aid. These recommendations include allocating new graduate spaces to the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and Simon Fraser University to fund graduate student research and enrolment as well as ensure that no qualified graduate student is denied access to study on the basis of financial circumstances. Here are some of the suggestions.

> *"Government has to build upon its recent funding for graduate students. For too many years, governments of all political stripes virtually ignored funding for graduate education. This was despite the fact that graduate students act as teaching assistants, research assistants and add generally to the intellectual life of the university."* (Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia).

> *"Indeed, Campus 2020's most ambitious targets concern research — to make B.C. one of the top three provinces in Canada for support for university-based research by 2010. This target is inseparable from another target of enrolling more graduate students per capita than any other province."* (University Presidents Council of British Columbia).

> *"Government has to pay more attention to the role of graduate education and the role that that plays in a high-quality university. For many years government funding for graduate education was virtually ignored by governments of all political stripes. The 2007 budget marked the start of new funding specifically for graduate education, something which we welcome and which we stress needs to be continued."* (University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association).

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

A message that we heard from several business organizations was that they are ready and willing to offer post-secondary students opportunities for practical work experience through co-operative education programs. Such programs would benefit not only students looking to fund their post-secondary education, but also aid businesses in addressing critical labour shortages. However, while private sector businesses are willing to take on more co-op students, they require some form of tax credit to offset training requirements and employee replacements. The Victoria Chamber of Commerce estimated that a tax credit to B.C. business employers equal to 15 percent of wages paid to qualified co-op students would cost the government approximately $8.5 million, based on 2006-07 enrolment numbers.

Here is a sample of the submissions we received on this topic.

"Our labour market has never been more competitive than it is now. Co-op placement is one way for small business in particular to introduce the province's students to the career opportunities in their own backyard, giving our provincial businesses a competitive edge over companies in other provinces working very hard to attract our B.C. graduates." (Victoria Chamber of Commerce).

"Co-op placements provide students with on-the-job training and experience while still in school. These arrangements also provide employers an opportunity to train potential workers. We support educational initiatives…such as the co-op tax credit to B.C. business employers. Such a program would ensure more of our province's young workers were highly trained, with connections in their local economy." (Chartered Accountants of British Columbia).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

43. **consider all potential barriers to access to post-secondary education including:**
    - **access to student loans,**
    - **interest charged on B.C. student loans,**
    - **tuition fees; and**
    - **access to needs-based student grants.**
44. **enhance funding for graduate students and graduate student spaces, per the *Campus 2020* report.**
45. **consider introducing a co-operative education tax credit to permit small business to provide training opportunities for post-secondary students.**

LABOUR SHORTAGES

Many witnesses appearing before the Committee noted the difficulties small- and medium-sized businesses were having in finding and retaining employees in both skilled and labourer positions. To address this issue of continued and growing concern, witnesses requested that the government enhance the provincial nominee program and an expansion of the Trades Trailer program.

PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAM AND IMMIGRATION

A concern that we heard from industry and business organizations was that British Columbia is facing a significant labour shortage in both skilled and labourer positions. For example, the British Columbia Construction Association indicated that over the next eight years, 37,000 construction workers are required to meet domestic demand. However, the industry is already facing critical labour shortages — with the situation slated to worsen with an aging worker population.

We heard strong demand for the provincial government to expand both the scope and scale of immigration permitted under the Provincial Nominee Program and for government to assist immigrants in learning marketable skills. Suggestions for improvement included creating an on-line portal that will connect immigrants to available positions; permitting individuals with relatively low skills eligibility to access the program; and significantly increasing the number of immigrants coming to British Columbia through the program. We also heard several industry requests to augment the supply of workers through both temporary and permanent immigration.

The B.C. Chamber of Commerce also relayed concerns that many skilled immigrants that come to B.C. are still finding it difficult to obtain employment in their profession or trade because their credentials are not recognized by Canadian employers and/or professional associations. The Chamber requested that the provincial government work with the federal government to fast-track credential assessment and recognition.

Here are some of the comments we received on this topic.

> *"We believe that this is a reasonable and strong part of the solution to British Columbia in solving, certainly, the construction industry's labour needs. We would encourage government to reinforce their commitment to the provincial nominee program to ensure that both employers and immigrants have timely access to the provincial nominee program. We believe that additional resources would not be wasted in improving the ability to provide service through the provincial nominee program."* (British Columbia Construction Association).

> *"If Canada is to have a viable immigration policy, it needs a system that gives potential immigrants assurance that their applications will be processed in an efficient manner within a reasonable and predictable period of time. Otherwise, they will look to other countries."* (B.C. Chamber of Commerce).

TRADES TRAINING TRAILER

One innovative way to promote skilled-trades options to youth living in rural or isolated communities has been the mobile trades-training trailer. The trailer is a mobile classroom that provides students access to welding equipment, drill presses, and other tools to supporting electrical, pipefitting, plumbing and welding education opportunities.

We heard support for this program from the Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce:

> *"The mobile training program has been such a success in the community. I know it's focused on the first nations communities, but we've been very privileged to have it come into our community on two of the terms."* (Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce).

The Committee encourages the government to develop similar mobile trades-training classrooms to allow British Columbians outside the lower mainland access to education opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee recommends that the government:

46. **expand the scope and scale of the provincial nominee program to increase the number of immigrants eligible to settle in British Columbia. The Committee also recommends that the government continue to work with the federal government to fast track credential assessment and accreditation and reduce red tape within the provincial nominee program.**

INCOME ASSISTANCE

Two issues pertaining to income assistance piqued the Committee's interest. First, we heard in Kamloops a request for the government to consider increasing the earnings exemption provided to persons receiving disability benefits to $1,000 per month. The witness appearing before the Committee indicated that increasing the earnings exemption would have a significant positive benefit on the lives of British Columbians living with disabilities.

> *"We'd like you to see disabled persons as individuals with varying abilities, not disabilities, and to believe in the philosophy that we are only as good as we treat those less able than ourselves and that if you extend a helping hand, you will be rewarded with a positive outcome. (We request that you consider) increasing the amount that disabled persons can earn on a monthly basis from the current $500 per month to $1,000 per month. This would allow disabled persons to work towards purchasing a home of their own."* (Kamloops Society for Community Living).

Though not explicitly addressed in the submissions received, committee members also believe that the government should consider permitting income assistance recipients to continue to receive benefits if a concerted effort is made to improve their employment prospects through education.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee recommends that the government:

47. **consider increasing earnings exemption threshold for those on disability assistance to $1,000 per month from the current $500 per month.**
48. **consider permitting individuals on income assistance to continue to receive that benefit while pursuing education opportunities that enhance a transition to the workforce.**

TAXATION

Although options for the public to provide input on potential tax cuts were not provided for in this year's budget consultation paper, the Committee received many submissions calling on the government to continue to cut personal and corporate taxes. As we identified in our response to Question 3, there was support for tax shifting: that is, lowering personal income taxes while raising consumption taxes. However, we also heard a strong message that British Columbians feel that they are already overtaxed — particularly in light of the government's surplus projections.

We reiterate our position that the government's first priority should be maintaining a strong economy. To this end, we highlight three taxes that continue to hamper B.C.'s economic competitiveness: personal income taxes, corporate income taxes, and the corporate capital tax on financial institutions. We also examine the discussion we heard on tax harmonization proposals.

PERSONAL INCOME TAXES

We heard a clear message that the government should again consider reducing the overall taxes collected from individuals and families. This call goes beyond calls for the government to consider tax shifting — that is, offsetting higher consumption taxes with lower personal income taxes. Rather, the preference of many British Columbians is simply for the government to decrease the tax burden faced by the B.C. residents. Here are some of the comments we received on this topic.

> *"The Retail Council of Canada recommends that the B.C. government continue to improve the living standards of B.C. families by returning excess revenue to taxpayers through personal income tax cuts or a reduction in the PST."* (Retail Council of Canada).
>
> *"Reduce income taxes by increasing the basic deduction and lowering the tax rates at each tax level."* (James L. Swift, Parksville).

CORPORATE TAX RATE

A serious concern raised by the representatives of the business community was the need for to carefully monitor corporate tax rates to ensure that British Columbia remains competitive with Alberta. We again heard concerns that Alberta intends to reduce its corporate tax rate to 8 percent. Organizations appearing before the Committee argued that B.C.'s corporate tax rate should not exceed Alberta's tax rate by more than 25 percent.

Here are some of the comments we received on this topic:

> *"The B.C. Chamber of Commerce recommends that Budget 2008 include a public commitment to policy that ensures B.C.'s corporate tax rate does not exceed 125 percent of the corporate tax rate of that in Alberta. It is important to note that Alberta has committed to reduce its corporate tax rate to eight percent in the coming years."* (B.C. Chamber of Commerce).

> *"To remain competitive, the B.C. Government should reduce the corporate income tax rates by at least one percentage point in 2008/09. Such a reduction is particularly important for B.C.'s small to medium-sized businesses that need the additional cash flow to fund their growth."* (Vancouver Board of Trade).

CAPITAL TAX ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

An area of ongoing concern expressed by financial institutions is the continued application of the corporate capital tax on financial institutions. The Committee learned that all of British Columbia's major competitors in the financial services sector — Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec — have, or intend to, phase out capital taxes on financial institutions by 2011. In addition, B.C.'s credit unions raised a particular concern over paying the tax on earnings that fund the Credit Union Deposit Insurance Corporation. The statements made on the corporate capital tax on financial services are highlighted below.

> *"The Canadian Bankers Association's number one budget priority for B.C. continues to be the elimination of the capital tax levied against the financial services industry. This tax creates an economic distortion by singling out one industry for a higher, more punitive rate of taxation, and it sends a very strong and negative signal to potential investors in this sector."* (Canadian Bankers Association).

> *"The Chartered Accountants of B.C. fully supported the phasing out of the corporate capital tax on general corporations earlier this decade, and we believe it is now the time to remove the capital tax on financial institutions."* (Chartered Accountants of British Columbia).

> *"The imposition of corporation capital tax on credit unions is especially punitive in that financial institutions are required to maintain and enhance their capital bases, to ensure that they are able to withstand operating losses. Given that the provincial government backstops the Credit Union Deposit Insurance Corporation, this is commendable public policy. However, it is incongruous that credit unions are required to pay taxes on earnings retained to ensure their financial stability, that protect CUDIC's fund and, ultimately, safeguard the taxpayer."* (Credit Union Central of British Columbia).

TAX HARMONIZATION

The Committee heard from the business community that they want the government to examine harmonizing the provincial sales tax with the federal goods and services tax. Again this year, we heard from B.C.'s retailers and accountants advocating British Columbia do away with the unnecessary duplication from collecting two separate sales taxes. In addition, it was argued that integrating the two consumption tax systems would lower costs and reduce the administrative burden of both business and government. The Committee believes harmonization should be examined with a view of protecting the province's capacity to use the provincial sales tax to meet various policy objectives and to not add to the overall tax burden of British Columbians. Here are some of the submissions we received on this topic.

> *"For many years, the Retail Council of Canada has pressed for harmonization of provincial sales taxes with the GST. We believe the value-added nature of the GST is much superior to the retail sales tax model. As well, harmonization of commodity taxation into one system also would bring important economic benefits and savings to governments and taxpayers. RCC was an active and vocal supporter of the implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax in the three Atlantic Provinces."* (Retail Council of Canada).

> *"Those of you who participated in this process before will know that we have long been advocates for the harmonization of federal and provincial sales taxes. The current tax system requires about 400,000 B.C. businesses to administer two separate sales taxes, one at the provincial level and one at the federal level. The lack of harmonized sales tax translates into two key disadvantages for B.C. businesses. Firstly, B.C. businesses require separate recordkeeping, reporting and remittance for the GST and the PST, creating unnecessary costs for accounting and administration. In addition, businesses must deal with two sets of auditors enforcing compliance at the provincial and federal levels, based on two different sets of rules. Secondly, provincial sales tax is paid on inputs — for example, business supplies and materials — and is not creditable against tax collected, which imposes additional costs on business. These input costs are simply passed along to the consumers as a hidden tax. Both of these competitive disadvantages could be resolved through harmonization."* (Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that the government:

49. **ensure that personal and corporate income taxes in British Columbia are competitive with other jurisdictions.**
50. **examine the costs, benefits, and policy implications of eliminating the corporate capital tax on financial institutions.**
51. **review the viability of harmonization of the provincial sales tax and the federal goods and services tax, with a view to ensure that there will be no net negative impact on consumers nor government's capacity to use the sales tax for public policy purposes.**

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

The Committee received a submission from Katy Hutchinson, the widow of a murder victim, concerning the important role restorative justice programs can play as crime-reduction strategy. These programs focus on the participation of those most directly involved in a crime - the victim, community and the offender – in the justice process. The goals are to collectively address the responsibility of the offender and the harm done to victims, to facilitate the reintegration of both into the community, and to prevent future crime.

Ms. Hutchinson's submission indicated that restorative justice programs reduce the need for incarceration and they reduce recidivism rates. She informed the Committee that grassroots restorative justice programs rely on grant funding from government and other sources. The province currently provides $150,000 to restorative justice programs in the form of $2,500 grants. However, grant applications are time-consuming and the funding is unstable. She appeared before the Committee to request adequate and stable funding for restorative justice projects to realize their full potential to build and sustain safe communities. Some of her comments are presented below.

> *"[Through restorative justice] I was given a voice, and I got back some of the loss of control that Bob's murder had inflicted upon me and my family. I was given a chance to find humanity in a situation that up until that point had been anything but humane. Most importantly, I was able to take an active role in breaking the cycle of violence for this young man…I agree that we need the existing traditional justice system and prisons to house offenders where incarceration is in the best interest for all concerned. But I believe we also need properly funded restorative justice programs throughout the province to address crime at a grass-roots level, divert young people and stem the downward spiral of criminal behaviour, build relationships where none exist, repair harm and empower victims, strengthen families and build a safe community."* (Katy Hutchinson, Victoria).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

52. consider providing additional funding in support of restorative justice programs.

COMMUNITY COURTS

The Legal Services Society of British Columbia appeared before the Committee advocating that government make certain that sufficient resources are provided to the community court pilot program to ensure its success. The community court project seeks to integrate justice, health, and social services within the same room. The intention of the program is to provide better integration amongst the different agencies that deliver services to offenders; provide greater efficiency to hold offenders accountable more quickly; and provide sentences that address the root causes of criminal behaviour.

The Committee believes that the community program pilot program has the potential to address many of the underlying causes of criminal behaviour. However, in order for the pilot program to succeed, the government should re-affirm its financial commitment to ensure its success.

> *"One of the things we've learned over the past year, as we've started digging into this issue further, is that the silos within public services are so endemic, so structural that there is neither budgeting nor planning that happens in a way that actually addresses those needs. The community court program that the Ministry of Attorney General is bringing forward is a strong first step in that direction, but it is a first step. … we'd encourage you to begin an examination about how budgeting can occur so that we get a more outcome-oriented approach to that social service/justice service delivery."* (Legal Services Society of British Columbia).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

53. encourage the expansion of the community court pilot program to other centres.

LEGAL AID

A second issue presented by the Legal Services Society and other witnesses was for the government provide additional legal aid resources, especially to aid to families appearing before the courts. The witnesses appearing the Committee stressed that providing additional resources in this area would go a long way to improve the quality of life of innocent children stuck in the middle of difficult family disputes. Here is what we heard on this topic.

> *"Legal aid needs money for family law. Family law is the most difficult of all of the areas of law because we deal with children. We deal with abused children. We deal with special needs children. We deal with children who are not yet diagnosed. We deal with kids for whom there is no diagnosis. My pitch is for more money, please, to go to legal aid so that we can represent children."* (Dr. Mychael Gleeson, Coquitlam).

> *"Family law is a special area as far as I am concerned. It's a fragile, sensitive area. It's got huge, significant ramifications, I think, for the lives of families, children and all of us in the community. It impacts us all. That's why I think that the government needs to spend special attention to make sure that this area is adequately funded, as it affects us all."* (Legal Services Society of British Columbia).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

54. consider applying the provincial sales tax collected on legal fees to legal aid, and in particular, provide support to legal aid for family law clients.

SPECIAL NEEDS FUNDING

A submission from the Vancouver Parents for Successful Inclusion outlined the difficulties faced by parents of students with special needs and high incidence students. The presentation noted that in B.C., the number of special needs students has increased while the number of special needs teachers has decreased, resulting in a decline in one-on-one instruction.

> *"We can't afford not to educate these students, as so many have the potential to become independent, productive, tax-paying members of our society but may instead be condemned to lives of dependence if their learning needs are not met. Investing in our students will bring great returns. We can do better. We all know that we must do better. And there is no excuse not to do so."* (Vancouver Parents for Successful Inclusion).

B.C. IDENTIFICATION CARDS

In Terrace, the Committee received an interesting request for the government to consider allowing persons with permanent disabilities to voluntarily have information about their disability printed on their British Columbia Identification Cards (BCID). The witness explained that having this information on their government-issued identification card would improve the quality of life for those whose disabilities may not be visible. The card could be shown by the holder to access municipal or provincial services offered to persons with disabilities; aid the police in identifying persons in need of assistance; and assist persons who require additional assistance while traveling. In addition, having such an identification card would reduce the need for a person with disabilities to get a note from a physician to prove a disability.

> *"I would like to see, in the 2008 budget, money put towards the already existing BCID card to add onto the back of the ID card a person's disabilities, similar to the way restrictions are put on a driver's license. This information contained on the card would be voluntary. Why is this information needed? People who have a hidden or visible permanent disability living in B.C. do not have legal proof to show they have a permanent disability."* (Yvonne Nielsen, Terrace).

The presenter to the Committee in Terrace made a passionate, well-reasoned suggestion. The Committee applauds her determination in bringing this issue to our attention. We believe it to be a proposal worthy of the government's attention.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the government:

55. **examine the feasibility of establishing a voluntary system of identification for individuals with permanent disabilities.**

CONCLUSIONS

The all-party Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services conducted its annual budget consultation process from September 14 to October 26, 2007. Over the course of this consultation period, the Committee received more than 5,800 submissions on topics ranging from steps the government should take to address climate change, to suggestions on how to ensure the sustainability of B.C.'s health care system, to propositions to address housing issues. Through our public hearings and written submissions, we received hundreds of other proposals pertaining to the allocation of the province's fiscal resources. This report, and its 55 recommendations, summarise the key issues the Committee heard and read during our consultations.

With respect to the Committee's recommendations on addressing greenhouse gas emissions, the Committee believes that measures to reduce gas emissions must not have an adverse effect on B.C.'s strong economic position or increase the provincial debt-to-GDP ratio. Indeed, we believe that the challenge to reduce greenhouse gases by 33 percent by 2020 poses an excellent opportunity for B.C. to become a leader in developing and promoting new and exciting technological innovations.

It is apparent that the vast majority of British Columbians taking part in this year's budget consultation process want the government to take decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To this end, the Finance Committee endorses, as a first step, the creation of a website that will provide factual information on the impacts of climate change in British Columbia's environment and economy, information on what steps individuals and business can take to reduce their environmental impact, and serve as repository of the myriad of programs and ideas available to individuals and business willing to change their behaviour.

However, we also heard, particularly from residents outside of metro Vancouver and greater Victoria, of real concerns that tax shifting and additional transportation taxes would unduly penalize British Columbians living outside of major urban centres. While the Committee is not entirely against introducing new forms of taxation to address climate change, we strongly believe that the government should — as first priority — consider incentive-based programs targeting behavioural change in both individuals and businesses.

Such incentive-based programs may include additional resources to promote energy-efficient households; multi-faceted support for the British Columbia agriculture industry; additional resources to promote made-in-B.C. biofuels; various programs to improve the efficiency of B.C.'s trucking fleet; and measures to promote environmentally-friendly consumer packaging. To allay some of the concerns expressed by urban residents, we also endorse calls for the government to expedite — where fiscally feasible — investments in rapid transit infrastructure.

Over the course of our deliberations, we heard from many individuals — aided by information prepared by technologically-savvy environmental advocacy organizations — calling on the government to implement a carbon tax. Conversely, we heard relatively few submissions even mentioning the cap-and-trade system of emissions trading favoured by the government and by many other North American jurisdictions. As a Committee charged to receive input on the province's budget and fiscal policy, we simply lack the necessary resources to evaluate the benefits and costs of each system. However, in light of the growing North American consensus favouring the cap-and-trade system to reduce net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, we recommend the government take leadership in promoting a carbon trading system.

The budget consultation paper also asked for British Columbians to provide feedback on the topics of ensuring sustainability within our health care sector. The Committee was surprised by how few suggestions the public made on how to best ensure the British Columbia's health care system is accessible and available for future generations. However, we received many suggestions for the government to consider increased investments in public education campaigns on the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity to be delivered through ActNow BC; review the viability of tax credits for children, students, and seniors mirroring the standards set under the federal government's Children's Fitness Tax Credit; and substantial increase on the taxation of tobacco products. The Committee also believes that the government must do more to inform British Columbians about the looming budgetary crisis facing B.C.'s health care system.

Concerning the question on "other housing initiatives" the public wants the government to consider, the Committee believes that the government should continue to work with municipalities to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to create more affordable housing spaces for British Columbians on low and moderate incomes. We also recommend that the Minister Responsible for Housing review the *Residential Tenancy Act* to ensure that municipalities have the authority to review conversion of rental properties into de facto strata developments. We also recommend the government review the threshold levels specified under the property transfer tax, including raising the exemptions provided for first-time homebuyers.

Of course, the provincial budgetary priorities extend well beyond the confines of climate change, health care and housing. For example, we heard a strong need for the government to remember that environmental concerns go beyond greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, we heard requests and make recommendations for the government to enhance its commitments to air and water quality monitoring, river dredging and diking, and to consider increases to the Ministry of Environment's budget to enhance wildlife conservation, provincial park infrastructure and environmental regulatory enforcement.

We also heard requests for the government to review issues pertaining to arts funding, child care accessibility, resources available to the contracted community social services sector, post-secondary education, and restorative justice programs and the community court pilot program. We would also request the government consider a proposal that would provide persons with disabilities to voluntarily have that information listed on their provincially-issued identification.

With respect to measures to enhance economic growth, we re-confirm the Committee's recommendation that government continue to build highway infrastructure that is of provincial and national importance — namely the Gateway Program. We make recommendations to bolster B.C.'s mining industry, particularly in relation to First Nations and in relation to areas of the province hit by pine beetle, support the forest industry through transition, and bolster temporary immigration and immigration through the provincial nominee program. The Committee also recommends that the government consider reducing personal and corporate income taxes, eliminating the corporate capital tax on financial institutions and to give serious consideration to harmonizing the provincial social services tax with the federal goods and services tax.

These 55 recommendations reflect the Committee's response to the *Budget 2008 Consultation Paper*. These recommendations reflect both what we heard from the public during the consultation process, as well as some of the key issues identified by committee members during their deliberations. In making these recommendations, the Committee is fully aware that the government will do the technical analysis to determine if the proposals put forward are financially viable and would have a positive impact on the lives of British Columbians. We truly believe that this Committee plays an important role in ensuring that all British Columbians have the opportunity to provide real and heartfelt input into the fiscal and budgetary priorities of British Columbia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing greenhouse gas emissions:

The Committee recommends that the government:

1. maintain a growing economy and pay down the debt.
2. take decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
3. provide clear and concise information on programs and measures available to individuals and businesses on steps they may take to reduce greenhouse gases and incentives that are available to do so.
4. strengthen government's commitment to water and air quality monitoring, river dredging and river diking and consider increases to the budget of the Ministry of Environment to bolster wildlife conservation, park infrastructure, and regulatory enforcement.
5. continue to invest, as heavily as possible, in rapid transit infrastructure and bus transit.
6. consider programs or tax credits to encourage the production and consumption of environmentally-friendly products, including, but not limited to, solar power generation and geo-thermal heating and cooling.
7. provide additional resources and programs to promote locally-produced B.C. agricultural products and ensure that all British Columbians have access to nutritious food options.
8. increase British Columbia's contributions within federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements, such as the *Agricultural Policy Framework – Growing Forward* and the *Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Program.*
9. provide educational and additional resources to agricultural enterprises engaged in direct farm gate or "not for re-sale" operations to assist them to improve the quality and safety of their slaughter and product handling, including the facilitation of more licensed abattoirs.
10. work with industry to develop a technology development centre for research into food processing and bio-products production.
11. consider incentives and policies to encourage research into and production of biofuels and a B.C.-based, competitive biofuel manufacturing industry.
12. work with the B.C. Trucking Association to examine possible grant, rebate, or loan programs, to encourage the adoption of the EnviroTruck program.
13. consider measures that would promote green packaging for consumer goods. The government may also wish to examine the feasibility of penalties for the use of non-biodegradable packaging and overpackaging.
14. consider participating in a carbon trading system that benefits B.C. businesses and taxpayers.
15. consider new taxes to discourage activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions as a second choice to incentive-based programs.
16. should it choose a carbon tax, it should take measures to mitigate the impacts of such a tax on lower and middle-income families.
17. recognize there is a clear urban/rural divide with respect to increases to transportation-related taxation.

Sustaining health care

The Committee recommends that the government:

18. increase efforts to inform British Columbians about the changes to the delivery of health care services that will ensure the sustainability of the system into the future.
19. consider, through ActNowBC, increased investments in public education campaigns and programs such as B.C. School Fruit and Vegetables in School, to inform British Columbians about healthy lifestyle choices.
20. review the viability of providing fitness tax credits for children, students, and seniors— mirroring the Government of Canada's Children's Fitness Tax Credit.
21. consider increases to taxation on tobacco to discourage use.
22. consider the use of tax policy to encourage sales of lower alcohol content beverages and promote a general reduction in alcohol consumption.
23. remove the tax exemptions provided to "candies and confections" under the Social Services Tax Act.
24. continue to invest in the creation of primary care throughout the province as a means to relieve hospital emergency and acute care wards and as a means to keep people better informed and healthier.
25. consider bolstering resources available for seniors home support to prevent seniors from having to access emergency, acute care and complex care.
26. fund the physician training program at the University of British Columbia – Okanagan, and fund regional community colleges to provide the full Registered Nurse program.

Housing British Columbians

The Committee recommends that the government:

27. develop a long-term action plan to address homelessness; ensuring that the long-term action plan has a particular focus on those suffering from a mental health affliction or an addiction, aboriginal people, and women.
28. take steps, in concert with local government and the federal government, to facilitate the creation of affordable housing for those British Columbians earning low and moderate incomes.
29. review the *Residential Tenancy Act* and other relevant legislation to ensure that local municipalities have the authority to review and permit the conversion of rental properties to strata-like developments, including leases of longer than 20 years.
30. continue to review the thresholds for the property transfer tax, including raising the exemption level provided for first-time homebuyers.

Supporting the artistic community

The Committee recommends that the government:

31. consider additional funding to the B.C. Arts Council and to all British Columbia's artists and cultural organizations such that B.C.'s total arts funding from all government sources is not less than third highest amongst the Canadian provinces. Furthermore, government should ensure that arts funding is equitably distributed to rural and isolated artists and to the multicultural community.

Child care

The Committee recommends that the government:

32. complete an inventory of the waitlists for child care spaces in B.C. and identify the financial impacts on the provincial economy of the delays in obtaining child care services by families and take action to meet the demand.

Early childhood education – staff training and retention

The Committee recommends that the government:

33. investigate options for addressing issues pertaining to staff recruitment in early childhood education, including additional resources to provide student loan relief, and salary subsidies for professionals in this field.

Contracted community social services cost pressures

The Committee recommends that the government:

34. provide increased resources to the contracted community social services sector to offset inflationary cost pressures.

Early assessment

The Committee recommends that the government:

35. allocate necessary resources to eliminate the waitlists for assessments of children and youth with special needs.

Forestry

The Committee recommends that the government:

36. consider establishing market pricing on a regional basis in the Interior so that the higher logging and harvesting costs in the southern, north-western and north-eastern regions are recognized and that these regions do not continue to be penalized by the increasing volume and decreasing quality of pine beetle wood in the central interior.
37. consider providing additional assistance directly to forestry-dependent communities to allow them to develop diversification strategies and to help mitigate the negative social impacts of the current, unprecedented downturn in the industry.
38. work closely with the federal government to develop a more comprehensive and coordinated response to the pine beetle epidemic.

Mining

The Committee recommends that the government:

39. consider creating a Mineral Tax Credit equal to 50 percent of the costs of pre-production.
40. establish a clear policy on the sharing of government revenues from new mines with affected First Nations.
41. consider the measurable benefits of additional investment in Geoscience BC.

Transportation infrastructure

The Committee recommends that the government:

42. continue to make strategic investments in transportation infrastructure projects that are crucial to the economy of British Columbia and Canada, such as the Asia Pacific Gateway Program.

Post-secondary education

The Committee recommends that the government:

43. consider all potential barriers to access to post-secondary education including:
    - access to student loans,
    - interest charged on B.C. student loans,
    - tuition fees; and
    - access to needs-based student grants.
44. enhance funding for graduate students and graduate student spaces, per the *Campus 2020* report.
45. consider introducing a co-operative education tax credit to permit small business to provide training opportunities for post-secondary students.

Labour shortages

The Committee recommends that the government:

46. expand the scope and scale of the provincial nominee program to increase the number of immigrants eligible to settle in British Columbia. The Committee also recommends that the government continue to work with the federal government to fast track credential assessment and accreditation and reduce red tape within the provincial nominee program.

Income assistance

The Committee recommends that the government:

47. consider increasing earnings exemption threshold for those on disability assistance to $1,000 per month from the current $500 per month.
48. consider permitting individuals on income assistance to continue to receive that benefit while pursuing education opportunities that enhance a transition to the workforce.

Taxation

The Committee recommends that the government:

49. ensure that personal and corporate income taxes in British Columbia are competitive with other jurisdictions.
50. examine the costs, benefits, and policy implications of eliminating the corporate capital tax on financial institutions.
51. review the viability of harmonization of the provincial sales tax and the federal goods and services tax, with a view to ensure that there will be no net negative impact on consumers nor government's capacity to use the sales tax for public policy purposes.

Restorative justice

The Committee recommends that the government:

52. **consider providing additional funding in support of restorative justice programs.**

Community court pilot program

The Committee recommends that the government:

53. **encourage the expansion of the community court pilot program to other centres.**

Legal aid

The Committee recommends that the government:

54. **consider applying the provincial sales tax collected on legal fees to legal aid, and in particular, provide support to legal aid for family law clients.**

British Columbia identification card

The Committee recommends that the government:

55. examine the feasibility of establishing a voluntary system of identification for individuals with permanent disabilities.

APPENDIX A: WRITTEN, ON-LINE, AND FLYER RESPONSES BY REGION

Electoral Districts	Online	Flyers	*Written*
North Fraser Valley			
1. Abbotsford-Clayburn	119	67	*19*
2. Abbotsford-Mount Lehman			
11. Chilliwack-Kent			
12. Chilliwack-Sumas			
South Fraser Valley			
21. Fort Langley-Aldergrove	134	53	*20*
26. Langley			
28. Maple Ridge-Mission			
29. Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows			
Mid-Island			
3. Alberni-Qualicum	212	108	*56*
30. Nanaimo			
31. Nanaimo-Parksville			
14. Comox Valley			
North Island / Coast			
16. Cowichan-Ladysmith	158	55	*30*
35. North Island			
46. Powell River-Sunshine Coast			
North			
4. Bulkley Valley-Stikine	59	18	*14*
34. North Coast			
41. Peace River North			
42. Peace River South			
56. Skeena			
Prince George / Cariboo			
9. Cariboo North	113	46	*21*
10. Cariboo South			
47. Prince George-Mount Robson			
48. Prince George North			
49. Prince George-Omineca			
Kamloops / Thompson			
22. Kamloops	117	59	*20*
23. Kamloops-North Thompson			
55. Shuswap			
79. Yale-Lillooet			
Okanagan			
24. Kelowna-Lake Country	188	78	*24*
25. Kelowna-Mission			
39. Okanagan-Vernon			
40. Okanagan-Westside			
43. Penticton-Okanagan Valley			
South-east			
13. Columbia River-Revelstoke	139	57	*21*
19. East Kootenay			
32. Nelson-Creston			
76. West Kootenay-Boundary			
Outside BC/Incomplete Addresses			
On-line Submissions	2		
Flyer Responses	63		
Written Submissions	3		

Electoral Districts	Online	Flyers	*Written*
Burnaby / New Westminster			
5. Burnaby-Edmonds	209	69	*27*
6. Burnaby-North			
7. Burnaby-Willingdon			
33. New Westminster			
Tri-Cities			
8. Burquitlam	219	55	*12*
15. Coquitlam-Maillardville			
44. Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain			
45. Port Moody-Westwood			
South Fraser			
17. Delta North	167	65	*23*
18. Delta South			
50. Richmond Centre			
51. Richmond East			
52. Richmond-Steveston			
Surrey			
57. Surrey-Cloverdale	143	65	*14*
58. Surrey-Green Timbers			
59. Surrey-Newton			
60. Surrey-Panorama Ridge			
61. Surrey-Tynehead			
62. Surrey-Whalley			
63. Surrey-White Rock			
Vancouver East			
66. Vancouver-Fraserview	433	51	*14*
67. Vancouver-Hastings			
68. Vancouver-Kensington			
69. Vancouver-Kingsway			
71. Vancouver-Mount Pleasant			
Vancouver West			
64. Vancouver-Burrard	777	112	*51*
65. Vancouver-Fairview			
70. Vancouver-Langara			
72. Vancouver-Point Grey			
73. Vancouver-Quilchena			
North Shore			
36. North Vancouver-Lonsdale	236	70	*27*
37. North Vancouver-Seymour			
77. West Vancouver-Capilano			
78. West Vancouver-Garibaldi			
Greater Victoria			
20. Esquimalt-Metchosin	438	150	*81*
27. Malahat-Juan de Fuca			
38. Oak Bay-Gordon Head			
53. Saanich North and the Islands			
54. Saanich South			
74. Victoria-Beacon Hill			
75. Victoria-Hillside			

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC HEARINGS WITNESS LISTS

Academic Workers' Union, Sheree Ronaasen, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Pamela Alexis, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
Ameresco, Doug Wall, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
AmeriSpec, Murray Klingbeil, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
Dave Andrews, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Arts Council of Surrey, Axel Conradi, Morna Edmundson, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
ArtsConnect TriCities Arts Council, Sherry Carroll, Helen Daniels, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Association for Mineral Exploration of British Columbia, Dan M. Jepsen, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training, Norma Strachan, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
B.C. Government and Service Employees Union, Lorene Oikawa, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, Fairleigh Murray, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Ken Baker, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Jordan Bateman, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
BC Agriculture Council, Garnet Estell, Dick Klein Geltink, Christine Koch12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
BC Biodiesel Association, Ian Thomson, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
BC Family Net Society, Judi Carter-Smith, Anita Dadson, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
BC Food Processors Association, S. Anthony Toth, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
BC Grain Producers Association, Garnet Berge, Irmi Critcher, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
BC Sustainable Energy Association, Guy Dauncey, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
BC Sustainable Energy Association - Kamloops Chapter, Matt Greenwood, Cheryl Kabloona, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
BC Trucking Association, Paul Landry, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Nancy Bepple, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Anna Bernard, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Board of Education (Mission), School District No. 75, Frank Dunham, Carole Hamilton, Ray Velestuk05-Oct-07 (Mission)
Kathy Bonell, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Boys and Girls Club Service of Greater Victoria, Ralph Hembruff, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
British Columbia Association of Child Development and Intervention, Bruce Sandy, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
British Columbia Chamber of Commerce, Jon Garson, John Winter, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
British Columbia College of Chiropractors; British Columbia Chiropractic Association, Dr. Don Nixdorf, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
British Columbia College Presidents, Dr. Liz Ashton, Dr. Lou Dryden, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
British Columbia Construction Association, Manley McLachlan, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association, Glen Lucas, Joe Sardinha, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
British Columbia Medical Association, Dr. Geoff Appleton, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
British Columbia Paraplegic Association, Stephanie Cadieux, Dr. John Steeves, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
British Columbia Refederation Party, John Twigg, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Susan Lambert, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Kesten Broughton, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Russ Burtnick, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Business Council of British Columbia, Jerry Lampert, Ken Peacock, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Mike Calder, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Camosun College Students Society, Matthew de Groot, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Campbell River Community Arts Council, Ken Blackburn, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D), Bob Dawson, Sharon McKinnon; Hal Stovall, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Canadian Bankers Association, Paul Griffin, Mark Smith, Greg Sprung, Clark Winder, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Canadian Bar Association - British Columbia Branch, Caroline Nevin, Ken Walton, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Canadian Bioenergy Corp., Fred Ghatala, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Canadian Cancer Society, BC and Yukon Division, Cathy Adair, Kathryn Seely, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, BC Office, Seth Klein, Marc Lee, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Laura Jones, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Canadian Federation of Students, BC Office, Summer McFayden, Shamus Reid, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Canadian Home Builders Association of British Columbia, Janet Cunningham, M.J. Whitemarsh, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Canadian Mental Health Association, British Columbia Division, Beverley Gutray, Bill Wright, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Canadian Mental Health Association, Kamloops Division, Douglas Sage, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - BC Chapter, Chloe O'Loughlin, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Canadian Taxpayers Federation, Maureen Bader, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
Canadian Union of Public Employees - BC Division, Mike Dumler, Barry O'Neill, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Castlegar and District Community Services Society, Robert Jackson, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Central Interior Logging Association, Rick Publicover, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
Centre for Addictions Research of BC, Dr. Perry Kendall, Dr. Tim Stockwell, 06-Nov-07 (Victoria)

Kyman Chan, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Child Care Advocacy Forum, Rita Chudnovsky, Sharon Gregson, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Child Care Resource & Referral Programs, Janis Arner, Pat Colbourne, Donna Legere, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)
Citizens for Quality Health Care, Lois Jarvis, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
City of Dawson Creek, Mayor Calvin Kruk, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
City of Prince George, Councillor Don Zurowski, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
City of Quesnel, Mayor Nate Bello, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)
City of Terrace, Mayor Jack Talstra, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Kathy Clarke, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Coast Forest Products Association, Rick Jeffery, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Coast Mountains School District #82, Linda Brown, Craig Caruso, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Colleen and Gordie Howe Middle School, Sharu Gakhar, Haman Gandhu, Zach Melhus, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
College of New Caledonia, Lynn Jacques, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
College of New Caledonia Students Union, Valentine Crawford, Justin Simon, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
College of the Rockies, Dr. Nick Rubidge, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia, Rob Clift, Chris Petter, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Council of Canadians - Campbell River Chapter, Joanne Banks, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
Council of Canadians - Comox Valley Chapter, Gwyn Frayne, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
Council of Canadians - Kamloops Chapter, Anita Strong, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Cranbrook and District Chamber of Commerce, Denise Pallesen, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Regina Dalton, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
David Suzuki Foundation, Ian Bruce, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
District of Chetwynd, Mayor Evan Saugstad, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
District of Maple Ridge, Mike Davies, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
District of Mission, Mayor James Atebe, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
Douglas College, Andrew Taylor, Susan Witter, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Douglas College Faculty Association, Susan Briggs, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Elders Council for Parks in BC, Jim Barlow, Colin Campbell, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Emily Carr Students' Union, Meghan King, Philippa Mennell, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Faculty Association of the College of New Caledonia, Dr. George Davison, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
Federation of Child and Family Services of BC, Jennifer Charlesworth, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC, Phillip Legg, Cindy Oliver, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Chris Finch, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, Adrienne Montani, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Fitness Industry Council of Canada, Jeff Ardron, Lonnie Tkach, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Forest Circle Child Care, Judi Malcolm, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
Fraser Valley Conservancy, John Vissers, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Fraser Valley Real Estate Board, Debbie Jay, Scott Olson, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Fraser Valley Regional District, Lloyd McKimmon, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
John Funk, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
Georgia Strait Alliance, Christianne Wilhelmson, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Geoscience BC, Lyn Anglin, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Drelene Gibb, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Andrea Goertzen, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Kameron Goring, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)
Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, Lee Murray, Judy Whyte, Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture, Roger Chilton, Adrienne Wong, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Lindalee Brougham, Shannon Renault, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Darryl Anderson, Paul Servos, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Sandrina Harwood, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
Mary Helan Hatch, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Ted Hawryluk, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Diane Heitmann, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Richard Hogg, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
Human Early Learning Partnership, Dr. Paul Kershaw, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Independent Power Producers Association of BC, Steve Davis, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia, Richard Rees, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
Insurance Bureau of Canada, Serge Corbeil, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Kamloops and District Fish and Game Association, Hank Karpuk, Don Tretheway, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Kamloops Child Development Society, Deborah Frolek, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Kamloops Foundation, Paddy Harrington, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Kamloops Society for Community Living, Chris Murray, Mona Murray, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Henry Kolenko, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Kootenay Boundary Regional Resources Co-operative, Andrew Jarrett, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Dr. Eugene Krupa, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
Christabelle Kux-Kardos, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)

Kwantlen Faculty Association, Maureen Shaw, Terri van Steinburg, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Kwantlen Student Association, Laura Anderson, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)

Lebrun Ranch Limited, John Cameron, Leo Lebrun, Yvonne Lebrun, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Legal Services Society, Mark Benton, Bruce Clokie, Mayland McKimm, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Ingrid Liepa, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)

Marilyn Lissimore, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)

Ian MacPherson, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Make Children First, Valerie Janz, Vi-Anne Zirnhelt, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)

Lori Malone, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)

Maple Creek Streamkeepers, Dianne Ramage, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)

Mary Manning Centre, Fred Ford, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Meyers Norris Penny LLP, Darcy Haw, George Mason, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

Mining Association of British Columbia, Michael McPhie, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)

Mission and District Rod and Gun Club, Len Grinnell, Tom Norman, Mark Rushton, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)

Stan Mitchell, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)

Helen Mobach, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)

Motion Picture Production Industry Association of British Columbia, Peter Leitch, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)

Multi-Centre Task Force, Robin Hay, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Mychael Gleeson and Company, Dr. Mychael Gleeson, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)

Nanaimo Child Development Centre Society, Jean-Marc Jaquier, Laura Addison, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre, Theo J. Boere, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

New Media BC, Kelly Zmak, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Yvonne Nielsen, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)

North Cariboo Post Secondary Education Trades & Training Council, Ed Coleman, Mary Glassford, Doug Larsen, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

North Island College, Dr. Lou Dryden, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

North Island College Faculty Association, Shirley Ackland, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

North Island Students' Union, Patrick Barbosa, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

North Okanagan Youth and Family Services Society, John Belfie, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

North West CruiseShip Association, John Hansen, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)

Northern Health Authority, Shirley Gray, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)

Northwest Community College, Diane Ready, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)

Okanagan College, Jim Hamilton, Lance Kayfish, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

Okanagan College Students' Union, David Lubbers, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

Pagebrook Inc., Mike Grenier, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)

Vinay Parmar, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)

PATCHES, Marlene Anderson, Richard Turner, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)

Peace River Regional District, Karen Goodings, Larry White, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)

Pembina Institute, Matt Horne, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)

Lynn Perrin, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)

Plutonic Power Corporation, Donald McInnes, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)

Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Michael Kerr, Sherry Sethen, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)

Private Forest Landowners Association, Rod Bealing, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Professional Arts Alliance of Greater Victoria, Ian Case, David Shefsiek, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Protect our Ports Committee, James Bourquin, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)

Quadra Island Protected Areas Committee, Noel Lax, Judy Leicester, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

Quesnel and District Chamber of Commerce, Michael Boreen, Coralee Oakes, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Quesnel and District Community Arts Council, Bernice Heinzelman, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation, Jim Savage, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Quesnel Museum and Heritage Commission, Lorna Townsend, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Raise the Rates Coalition, Alan C. James, Jane Swanson, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)

Domenic Rampone, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, Sylvia Sam, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Real Women of BC, Laurie Geschke, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)

Restorative Justice, Katy Hutchison, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Retail BC, Mark Startup, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)

Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Craig Jones, Bruce Rozenhart, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)

Royal Roads University, Dr. Allan Cahoon, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)

Gaëtan Royer, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)

Saanich Peninsula Health Association, Lyne England, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Save Our Northern Seniors Society, Jim Little, Margaret Little, Jean Leahy, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)

SBC Firemaster, Paul Adams, Brent Wiren, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)

School District #72, Campbell River Board of School Trustees, Michele Babchuk, George Maclagan, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

School District No. 60 (Peace River North), Ernie Inglehart, Linda Sewell, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)

Helen Secco, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)

Seniors Advocacy Service, Susan MacNeill, 18-Sep-07 (Quesnel)

Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, Lisa Matthaus, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)

Silken's ActiveKids Movement, Lister Farrar, Silken Laumann, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Silver Creek Premium Products, Preet Brar, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
Simon Fraser University, Joanne Curry, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Simon Fraser University, Wilf Hurd, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
South Peace Community Arts Council, Ellen Corea, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
South Peace Community Resources Society, Jane Harper, Diane Neubauer, 19-Oct-07 (Dawson Creek)
South Side Working Committee, Diana Penner, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Students' Unions of Vancouver Community College, Tiffany Kalanj, Vijaya Krishan, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Surrey Board of Trade, Ray Hudson, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Tembec Industries Inc., Troy Hromadnik, Tom Kirk, Chris Stagg, 09-Oct-07 (Cranbrook)
Tenisci Piva Chartered Accountants, Ron Tenisci, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Theatre North West: Community Arts Council of Prince George and District, Linda Herman, Anne Laughlin, Ted Price, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
Thompson Rivers University, Roger Barnsley, Ron Olynyk, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, Dennis Marsden, 05-Oct-07 (Coquitlam)
Truck Loggers Association, Dave Lewis, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)
University College of the Fraser Valley Faculty and Staff Association, Scott Fast, 05-Oct-07 (Mission)
University of British Columbia Students' Union - Okanagan, Krystal Smith, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association, Paul Bowles, 18-Sep-07 (Prince George)
University of Victoria Faculty Association, Chris Petter, Mary Sanseverino, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
University Presidents Council of British Columbia, Don Avison, Christine Massey, 10-Oct-07 (Kelowna)
University Presidents Council of British Columbia, Don Avison, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Vancouver Airport Authority, Susan Stiene, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Vancouver Board of Trade, Bernard Magnan, Al Sello, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Vancouver Community College, Linda Martin, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Vancouver Community College Faculty Association, Frank Cosco, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Vancouver Parents for Successful Inclusion, Dawn Steele, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Victoria Real Estate Board, Scott Kendrew, Bev McIvor, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Victoria Women's Sexual Assault Centre, Stephanie Capyk, Sandy McLellan, 03-Oct-07 (Victoria)
Voters Taking Action on Climate Change, Lauren Davis, Donald Gordon, David Green, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
West Coast Environmental Law, Margot McMillan, 21-Sep-07 (Vancouver)
Western Canada Theatre: Kamloops Art Gallery, Jann Bailey, Lori Marchand, 10-Oct-07 (Kamloops)
West-Side Lake/ Lakelse Lake Road Maintenance Association, John Almgren, Danielle Barnett, 19-Sep-07 (Terrace)
Whalley Business Improvement Association, Lesley Tannen, 11-Oct-07 (Surrey)
Ed Wilson, 12-Oct-07 (Abbotsford)
Malcolm Wrights, 20-Sep-07 (Campbell River)

APPENDIX C: WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

J.F. Abercrombie, FGS-2007-218
Paul Adams, FGS-2007-382
Arun Adhikary, FGS-2007-472
Kenneth Affleck, FGS-2007-165
Aggregate Producers Association of B.C., Paul Allard, FGS-2007-220
Betty Aitchison, FGS-2007-20
Ariole Alei, FGS-2007-215
Rick Alexander, FGS-2007-151
Dr. Ted Altar, FGS-2007-11
AmS Student Society of UBC Vancouver, David Wells, FGS-2007-364
Kris Andrews, FGS-2007-304
Rick Armishaw, FGS-2007-277
Melanie Arnis, FGS-2007-128
Frank Arnold, FGS-2007-313
G.D. Arnold, FGS-2007-455
Uto and Meriel Arnold, FGS-2007-103
Deirdre Ashenden, FGS-2007-411
Wendy Atkinson, FGS-2007-378
Daphne J. Avis, FGS-2007-482
Anne M. Ayre, FGS-2007-425
B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association, Jack Davidson, FGS-2007-211
Jean Bain, FGS-2007-388
Kenneth Baker, FGS-2007-258
Brooke Bannister, FGS-2007-104
Theresa Bassett-Price, FGS-2007-300
John Bary, FGS-2007-152
Eddie Bauch, FGS-2007-107
BC Healthy Living Alliance, Jean Blake, FGS-2007-353
James Beck, FGS-2007-472
Thea Beil, FGS-2007-328
L. Belanger, FGS-2007-223
Denis and Kathie Bell, FGS-2007-330
Linda Belton, FGS-2007-175
Pam and George Bentley, FGS-2007-63
Paul Berger, FGS-2007-37
Luigi Bertelle, FGS-2007-32
Janet Besler, FGS-2007-143
Bill Biggs, FGS-2007-160
BioProducts Association, Duncan Dow, FGS-2007-360
Andrew Blair, FGS-2007-333
Richard Blanchard, FGS-2007-193
Marja Blasé, FGS-2007-8
Gary Blidook, FGS-2007-35
Noreen Bosnich, FGS-2007-278
Abe Bourdon, FGS-2007-274
Pat Bourgeois, FGS-2007-396
W. K. Bowman, FGS-2007-239
Arthur Boyd, FGS-2007-371
Lisa Bramson, FGS-2007-470
Ellis Brayham, FGS-2007-84
British Columbia Association for Community Living, Laney Bryenton, FGS-2007-350
British Columbia Cycling Coalition, Richard Campbell, FGS-2007-448
British Columbia School Trustees Association, Penny Tees, FGS-2007-15
David Brown, FGS-2007-267
Gordon Brown, FGS-2007-7
Ian Brown, FGS-2007-69
Ken Brownridge, FGS-2007-60
Virginia Buckland, FGS-2007-97
Joseph Bulath, FGS-2007-299
Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, Troy Nikolai, FGS-2007-233
Carolyn Burr, FGS-2007-279
Dawne Burron, FGS-2007-14
Fred Busch, FGS-2007-269
Gillian Butler, FGS-2007-321
John Butterworth, FGS-2007-237
Catherine Campbell McLean, FGS-2007-370
Andrew Campbell, FGS-2007-319
Canadian Bioenergy Corp., Doug Hooper, FGS-2007-357
Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Chris Black, Cathleen Morrison, Todd Owen, FGS-2007-434
Canadian Diabetes Association, Jean Blake, Karen Philp, FGS-2007-457
Canadian Federation of University Women, Fran Mitchell, FGS-2007-435
Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association Inc., Frank Swedlove, FGS-2007-33
Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance, Jonathan Burke, FGS-2007-446
Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association, Mark von Schellwitz, FGS-2007-467
CanWest Waste Technologies, Steve Pocock, FGS-2007-246
Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society, Marg Evans, FGS-2007-483
Alanda Carver, FGS-2007-204
Raeleen Castle, FGS-2007-481
Catalyst Paper Corporation, Richard Garneau, FGS-2007-358
Paul Cech, FGS-2007-106
Certified Management Accountants of British Columbia, Colin Bennett, FGS-2007-329
Lynn Chappell, FGS-2007-111
Child Development Centre of Prince George and District, (Operated by the Cerebral Palsy Association of Prince George and District), Darrell Roze, FGS-2007-458
William Chinnixck, FGS-2007-415
Kevin Chy, FGS-2007-472
Citizens Advocating for Public Process and Sustainability, Michael Fall, FGS-2007-247
Clarity Wealth Management Inc., Carl Davidson, FGS-2007-170

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, Susan Harney, FGS-2007-385
Coast Mountain Teachers' Federation, Debra Thame, FGS-2007-443
Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, Ruby Berry, FGS-2007-468
Peter Colebrook, FGS-2007-346
Kristina Coleman, FGS-2007-337
Hazel Colme, FGS-2007-393
Community Social Services Presidents Council (CUPE), Dale Deal, FGS-2007-306
Steve and Nancy Cooley, FGS-2007-122
Edward W. Cooper, FGS-2007-390
Claudia Copley, FGS-2007-190
Lisa Costain, FGS-2007-466
Cowichan Bay Improvement District, Addie Johnstone, FGS-2007-79
Paul Craik, FGS-2007-327
Credit Union Central of British Columbia, Richard Thomas, FGS-2007-231
Patrick Cromie, FGS-2007-444
Sallie Dabb, FGS-2007-140
D'Arcy Davis-Case, FGS-2007-286
R. A. Dawson, FGS-2007-268
Paul Dean, FGS-2007-85
Ron Dearden, FGS-2007-56
Rolf Dekleer, FGS-2007-281
Dale Denis, FGS-2007-155
Chuck DeSorcy, FGS-2007-316
Eddie deSouza, FGS-2007-159
Naomi Devine, FGS-2007-184
Al Dinis, FGS-2007-3
Bernard Dobovicnik, FGS-2007-156
David Dowling, FGS-2007-462
John Dressler, FGS-2007-291
Don Drew, FGS-2007-221
Audrey Driscoll, FGS-2007-126
Ivan Druker, FGS-2007-19
David Dunaway, FGS-2007-120
Edmund and Connie Dunkinson, FGS-2007-38
Eva Durance, FGS-2007-407
Janet Dysart, FGS-2007-198
David Eadie, FGS-2007-17
John A. Eadie, FGS-2007-303
Steven Earle, FGS-2007-174
East Kootenay Child Care Resource and Referral, Kim Levie, FGS-2007-349
Bill Eccleston, FGS-2007-41
C. Bruce Edwards, FGS-2007-338
Murray Edwards, FGS-2007-413
Randy Ekholm, FGS-2007-383
Keith Ellender, FGS-2007-240
Russell Elliott, FGS-2007-188
Maryann Emery, FGS-2007-257
W.E. (Bill) Endert, FGS-2007-322
Energy Solutions for Vancouver Island (Society), Ian Gartshore, FGS-2007-248
Joe English, FGS-2007-472
Manuel Erickson, FGS-2007-163
Marg Evans, FGS-2007-308
FairAll Consulting, Lynn Perrin, FGS-2007-412
Malcolm Farrow, FGS-2007-400
Paul Fast, FGS-2007-100
Phyllis Fast, FGS-2007-91
Federation of BC Naturalists, Bev Ramey, FGS-2007-230
Michael Feldman, FGS-2007-373
Don Felt, FGS-2007-284
Lois Fenna, FGS-2007-282
Sherry Ferguson, FGS-2007-409
Gunda Fernandes, FGS-2007-5
Mal Finch, FGS-2007-83
Irene Fischer, FGS-2007-418
Dr. A. D. Fisher, FGS-2007-164
Kim Fisher, FGS-2007-144
Kelsey Fleming, FGS-2007-270
Elspeth Flood, FGS-2007-98
P.J. Floyd, FGS-2007-344
Duncan Forbes, FGS-2007-177
Dominic Forcier, FGS-2007-134
Colin Ford, FGS-2007-266
J.S. Foster, FGS-2007-386
Linda Fox, FGS-2007-93
Martha Fraser, FGS-2007-163
Friends Of Cypress Provincial Park Society, Alex Wallace, FGS-2007-361
Friends of Strathcona Park, John Milne, FGS-2007-427
Friends of West Kootenay Parks Society, Tim Thurston, FGS-2007-342
Dr. Kenneth Fung, FGS-2007-21
Jeremy Fyke, FGS-2007-245
Lynda Gagne, FGS-2007-263
Klaus Ganske, FGS-2007-75
Dr. Nancy Garwah, FGS-2007-465
Bernie Gaucher, FGS-2007-419
Fred Gehrs, FGS-2007-61
Jean Gelwicks, FGS-2007-12
Rebecca Georges, FGS-2007-417
Geoffrey Glass, FGS-2007-301
Carolann Glover McGillivray, FGS-2007-296
Ken Godwin, FGS-2007-148
Walter Goerzen, FGS-2007-280
Tony Gooch, FGS-2007-142
Tom Good, FGS-2007-6
Ben Goodier, FGS-2007-472
Alasdair Gordon, FGS-2007-384
Don and Lorraine Gordon, FGS-2007-217
Charlotte Gorley, FGS-2007-146
James Grayson, FGS-2007-437
Greater Victoria Seniors, Seniors' Advoate Service, Branch 191, Don Starting, FGS-2007-109
Michael Gregoroff, FGS-2007-226

Dr. Elizabeth Griffin, FGS-2007-389
Arthur G. Guppy, FGS-2007-305
Nakul Gupta, FGS-2007-472
John Haak, FGS-2007-132
Sheila Hamann, FGS-2007-92
Ken Hanna, FGS-2007-34
J.G. Hannan, FGS-2007-464
Bertil Hansson, FGS-2007-227
Julia Hare, FGS-2007-433
Ashala Harlingten, FGS-2007-355
Edward and Joy Harper, FGS-2007-157
Glenn Harrington, FGS-2007-209
Ed and Ruth Hartley, FGS-2007-283
Karen Hasegawa, FGS-2007-130
Jill Hasman, FGS-2007-81
Chris and Jean Haugland, FGS-2007-397
Robert Hawkes, FGS-2007-23
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Ash Katey, FGS-2007-72
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Bea Kinkead, FGS-2007-354
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Margaret Mabee, FGS-2007-276
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Ken MacKinnon, FGS-2007-222
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Jackie Martin, FGS-2007-408
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Dr. Helen Mau, FGS-2007-194
Theresa McAree, FGS-2007-381
Ronald McCaig, FGS-2007-4
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Nairn McConnachie, FGS-2007-18
Robert McCroskey, FGS-2007-46
Sheila McDonnell, FGS-2007-352
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Don and Edna McGill, FGS-2007-64
Sonja McGill, FGS-2007-201
Steven McKinney, FGS-2007-189
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M. Mclachlan, FGS-2007-196
Hanne McLean, FGS-2007-254
Nancy McMillan, FGS-2007-94
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E. Mechler, FGS-2007-275
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Cathy Morton, FGS-2007-52
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Carl and Gail Peter, FGS-2007-474
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Barbara Pinkiewicz, FGS-2007-129
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Ed Pitt, FGS-2007-210
Gordon Poffenroth, FGS-2007-232
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Anne Porter, FGS-2007-369
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Dennis Robinson, FGS-2007-9
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Doug Rogers, FGS-2007-71
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Nathaniel Sabanski, FGS-2007-339
Cathy Sakiyama, FGS-2007-136
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Jon Sharun, FGS-2007-472
Janet Shaw Rogers, FGS-2007-90
Rick Shea, FGS-2007-295
Robert Shepherd, FGS-2007-186

Jane Shofer, FGS-2007-189
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Alexander Shymkiw, FGS-2007-410
Roger Simms, FGS-2007-454
Carol Simpson, FGS-2007-48
Clive Skinner, FGS-2007-287
Claire Skjelvik, FGS-2007-463
Jim Smiley, FGS-2007-289
Mary Ann Smith, FGS-2007-62
Michael Smyth, FGS-2007-96
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South Okanagan Seniors Wellness Society, Wendy Weisner, FGS-2007-131
South Peace BC Sustainable Energy Association, Cheryl Shuman, FGS-2007-480
Diane St. Louis, FGS-2007-228
Rebecca Stannard, FGS-2007-392
Katharine Steig, FGS-2007-145
Lynda R. Stevens, FGS-2007-307
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Stewardship Centre for British Columbia Society, Rod Silver, FGS-2007-320
Larry Stewart, FGS-2007-399
Dr. Mary Stockdale, FGS-2007-43
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Lynda Strutt, FGS-2007-242
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Bill Taylor, FGS-2007-424
Gisela Temmel, FGS-2007-256
Laurie Tetlock, FGS-2007-166
Carman Thompson, FGS-2007-375
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Harald Tilgner, FGS-2007-158
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Sydney Tyson, FGS-2007-380
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Andrew van Dyk, FGS-2007-197
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Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, Arno Schortinghuis, FGS-2007-447
Vancouver Community Council, Ann Dumas, Natalie Marach, FGS-2007-207
Vancouver Natural History Society, Tim Blair, FGS-2007-324
Maria Varju, FGS-2007-95
Harry Vogt, FGS-2007-66
Terje Vold, FGS-2007-124
Volunteer BC, Michael McCoy, FGS-2007-343
VON Canada, Farah Mohamed, FGS-2007-404
Beverly Vreeswijk, FGS-2007-394
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Jim Walker, FGS-2007-451
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Sue Wardlaw, FGS-2007-244
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Lynn Watt, FGS-2007-340
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Patricia Jeanne Webb, FGS-2007-117
Barry Weinbaum, FGS-2007-431
Kristina Welch, FGS-2007-472
Norma Wells, FGS-2007-213
Marie D. Westby, FGS-2007-377
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Patrick Wilson, FGS-2007-472
W.G. Wilson, FGS-2007-290
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Tamas Zalatnai, FGS-2007-116
Sonja Zambik, FGS-2007-326
Dave Zelmer, FGS-2007-88
Heidi Zetzsche, FGS-2007-368

APPENDIX D: ON-LINE RESPONSES

Marc Aalbers
Farshad Abasi
Frank Abbott
Lorna Abbott
Stephen Aberle
Sally Abraham
Sheila Abraham
Danaca Ackerson
Kerly Acosta
Yvonne Adalian
Hal Adam
John Adamkovics
Darren Adams
Ed Adams
Kim Adamson
Tony Adamson
Jeannie Aderichin
Eric Aderneck
Matthew Aequitus
George Agnes
Samantha Agtarap
Jacque Ahlm
Geoffrey Ainsworth
Klari Aitken
David Albert
Landon Aldridge
Dr George Alexander
Rick Alexander
Ron Alexander
Paul Alexandrescu
Kylie Alfano
Betsy Alkenbrack
Bassam Al-Kuwatli
Brian Allaert
Deirdre Allaert
Bill Allen
Dwayne Allen
Ian Allen
Robert Allen
Suzen Allen
Ilka Allers-Olsen
Colleen Allison
Valerie Almas
Rachel Altman
John Alton
Amanda Amaral
Mahmood Amin
Reynolds Amor
Kevin Amos
L. Camilla Amundsen
Andya Anderson
Clifford Anderson
Deborah Anderson
Duane Anderson
Kathryn Anderson
Lynne Anderson
Michael Anderson
Nick Anderson
Ruben Anderson
Shelley Anderson
Graham Andesron
Iisak Andreller
Barbara Andreasen
Bob Andrews
Larry Andrews
Margaret W. Andrews
Danny Andrucko
Claus Andrup
David Angus
Philipp Annen
Paul Anseeuw
Ann Anstee
Susan Anthony
Nora Antoine
Bob Antoniuk
Rebecca Apostoli
Joy Appler
Ross Arbo
Jean Archer
Sean Archibald
Jennifer Ardiel
Charlotte Argue
D. Arland
Sarah Arlitt
Jan Armstrong
Kay Armstrong
Lesa Armstrong
Bruce Arnold
Chris Arnold
Drew Arnold
James Arpin
Keren Arush
Douglas Ash
Mark Ashby
Michael Ashton
Richard Ashton
William Ashwell
Hugh Ashworth
Tara Asquith
Grant Atchison
Bryan Atkinson
Harry Atkinson
Corey Attwell
Marc Aubanel
Sylvia Aubrey
Robyn Auclair
Rolf Auer
Caroline Auffredou
Brian Augustine
Jodi Augustine
Ann Auld
Ted Ault
Deborah And Frank Austin
Juliet (Bonny) Austin
Nancy Austin
Daniel Avar
Marilyn Avery
Chavah Avraham
Tommy Awesome
Tracey Axelsson
Lucille Ayers
Rosalind Aylmer
Simon Ayres
Malak Aziz
Christopher Babcock
Wayne Babinchuk
Patti Bacchus
Peter Bach
Catherine B. Bachand
Tenny Bache
Enid Backhouse
Barbara Bacon
Changoh Baek
Sue Bai
Carlos Bailetti
Philip Bailey
Timothy Bailey
Warren Bailey
Gord Baird
Daniel Baker
John L Baker
Kari Baker
Kathleen Baker
Kody Baker
Noel Baker
Paul And Bonnie Baker
Steve Baker
Onno Bakhoven
Herman Bakker
Stevan Balachanoff
Fred Balchunas
Graeme Balcom
Chris Ballance
Elizabeth Ballantyne
Sara Ballantyne
Leslie Ballentine
Peter Ballin
Michael Ballingall
David Balser
George Balzer
Wayne Balzer
Natalie Ban
David Bancroft
Mark Bandstra
Julieta Banerjee
John Banks
Irvin Banman
Nick Bansback
Dawn Baptiste
Enrique Barahona Ramos
Carrie Barber
Anne-Marie Baribeau
Lawrence Barichello
Doris Barker
John Barker
Trevor Barnes
Brian Barnett
C. William Barnett
Donna Barnett
Liz Barnett
George Barnhart
Susan Barois
Leeanne Barr
David Barrie
Aaron Barsky
Victor Bartell
John Bartlett
Sheila Bartlett
Kendrick Barton
Lorie Barton
Halimah Basrael
Iain Batchelor
Anthony (Tony) Bates
John Batho
Ann Batie
Saskia Battersby
Carol Battglio
Irma Battista
John Baty
Phyllis Baudais
Jerome Bauer
Jennifer Baumbusch
Noorkhan Sadrudin Bawa
Ken Baxter
Rob Baxter
Alan Baycroft
Maggie Baynham
Donald Beamish
Michael Bean
I Beaty
Greg Beaumont
Mary Beaussart
Christine Beck
Hans-Jurgen Becker
Jeff Becker
George Beckingham

Michelle Beda
Normande Bedard
Anne Beer
Philip Be'er
Anne Beesack
Richard Beever
Barry Begus
Reinhard Behrend
Shirley Beke
John Bell
Louiza Bell
Pat Bell
Mary Bellamy
Hank Jd Belland
Oriano Belusic
Morris Benetton
Leslie Benisz
Géza Benk
Brian Bennett
Cindy Bennett
Jami Bennett
Nicole Bennett
Philippe Benoit
Chris Bentley
Ryan Bentson
Fred Benzley
Donald Berg
Cornelius Bergen
Teresa Bergen-Skinner
Heinz Berger
Steven Berger
Adam Bergquist
Wayne Bergquist
Dean Bergstrom
Thomas Berkhout
Javier Bernal
Andrew Berrisford
Malcolm Berry
Suzanne Bertness
Jo-Lee Bertrand
Jason Bertucci
John Berwick
Janet Besler
Paul Best
Ken Betenia
Stewart Bethune
Andy Betker
Tjay Bettl[illegible]
Sarah Beul[illegible]
Dalyn Beye[illegible]
Mandeep Bhuller
Ian Biagi
Peter Bibbings
Susan Bibbings
Erin Biddlecombe
Paul Biedermann
Todd Biffard
Wayne Biffert
Taylor Biggar
Brian Bilkes
John Billham
Linda Bily
Janet Bingham
Tim Binnema
Glenn Birchwater
Edward Bird
David Bishop
Kathy Bishop
Eileen Bistrisky
Mary Bittroff
Bill Bixby
James Bjerring
Svein Bjordal
Len Blabey
Lou Black
Rod Black
Barry Blackman
Dixie-Lee Blackwood
Andrew Blair
Tim Blair
Tim Blair
Vivian Blaker
Maria Blanchard
Phil Blanchard
Corinne Blanchette
Greg Blanchette
Jack Blarowski
Richard Bles
Gordon Bliss
Kate Blomfield
Kevin Bloxham
Art Blundell
David Bodie
Joshua Bodie
Nancy Bodie
Nathan Bodie
Sean Bodie
Jordan Bodiguel
Ann Bodley-Scott
Terry Bodman
Douglas Boersema
Crystal Boeur
Marc Boissonneault
Diane Boivin
Lesli Boldt
Al Bolen
Brent Bolleman
Clayton Bolton
Mike Bolton
Gwen Bonell
Kevin Bonell
Laura Bonenfant
Jamie Bonham
Anna Bonner
Margret Bonney
Darralyn Bonnor
Robin Boodle
Laverne Booth
Teri Booth
Peter Borgmann
Nicole Borhaven
Peter Borkowicz
Elmer Borneman
Ricardo Bortolon
Ken Bosch
Myrna Bosomworth
Neil Bosomworth
Chris Bostock
James Boucher
Maurice Boucher
Kristan Boudreau
Jennifer Boulanger
Marilou Boulerice
Patsy Bourassa
Ken Bourdeau
Ron Bourgeois
Louis-Marie Bournival
Louise Boutin
Dave Bowering
Lori Bowman
Alfred Bowyer
Clifford Boychuk
Jade Boyd
Sandra Boyd
Susan Boyd
Marc Boyer
Mark Boyko
Elizabeth-Grace Boylan
Deanna Bracewell
Elizabeth Brach
Ridgway Brad
Sarah Bradbury
Theresa Brady
Tannis Braithwaite
Jack Bramhill
Cara Brand
Colin Brander
Alex Brandt
Robert Branning
Diane Braun
Doreen Braverman
Shan Bredenkamp
Kiyo Breiting
Ryan Bremner
Gerry Breneman
Manfred Brenner
Molly Brewis
Lisa Brideau
Kerrilyn Briggs
Todd Briggs
Peter Bright
Alain Brind'amour
Camillia Brinkman
Fiona Brinkman
Frank Bristol
Edmund Bristow
Amanda Broad
Chris Broadbent
Holly Broadland
Tony Brogan
James Brooks
Mark Brooks
Tammy Brooks
Wendy Brophy
Janine Brossard
John Brossard
Amy Jane Brown
Anna Brown
Derek Brown
Douglas Brown
Geoff Brown
Glen Brown
K. Terry Brown
Lynne Brown
Mathew Brown
Randy Brown
Robin Brown
Sue Brown
Zosia Brown
Pamla Browne
Rob Brownie
Roger Brownsey
Monty Bruce
James Bryan
Colin Bryant
David Bryant
Michae Bryant
Mrs Bryant
Glenn Buchanan
Matt Buchanan
Vern Buchholz
Kim Bucholtz
Anthony Buckland
Stephen Buckley
Gölök Z L Buday
Cyndie Buker
Donald Buker
Jane Buker
John Buker
Maria Buker
Russell Buker Adams
Harry Bull
Jeffrey Bull
Linda Bull

Janet Bulman
Louise Bunn
Stephen Burgess
Deborah Burian
Alec Burke
Kelly Burkett
Bryan E. Burkinshaw
Robert Burkinshaw
Terry Burn
David Burnett
Paige Burnett
George Burns
Shane Burr
Charles Burridge
Alan Burrows
Jeff Burrows
James Burslem
Carla Burton
Richard Burton
Ron Burton
Strang Burton
Brian Bury
Harriet Busch
Charles Butcher
Norma Butler
Ross Butterfield
John Butterworth
Patty Buttimer
Mike Buxton
Jacquie Bye
Michael Byers
Paul Byford
John Bylund
Ron Byres
Karen Byrne
Rosalinda Cabrera
Richard Caelius
Ian Caesar
Barbara Cairns
Doug Cairns
Marion Caldecott
Kathy Caldicott
Henry Caldwell
Jack Caldwell
Jennifer Callaghan
Patrick Callas
Ellen Calliou
Catherine Calverley
Robyn Cambrey
Caryn Cameron
Terri Cameron
Edith Camm
Alan Campbell
Diane Campbell
Jennifer Campbell
John Campbell
K Campbell
Linda Campbell
Richard Campbell
Stacy Campbell
Alison Campbell Urness
Myrna Campeotto
José Canjura
David Caplan
Don Caplan
Jodie Capling
Annie Carbonneau
Steve Carley
Richard Carlin
Anne L Carlson
Dennis & Fern Carlson
Dwight Carlson
Micah Carmody
Stephanie Caron
Andrew Carr
Toby Carr
Brittany Carree
Christine Carriere
Barbara Carroll
Brian Carruthers
Helen Carruthers
James Carruthers
Brent Carson
Bruce Carson
Megan Carson
Scott Carswell
Kaiva Carten
Donna Carter
Larry Carter
Jim Carter-Huffman
Alan & Glenda Casasempere
Julius Casimiro
Gwendal Castellan
Glenda Catalano
Harry Caton
Sam Catterall
Mike Caudwell
Duncan Cavens
Cameron Cavers
Donovan Cavers
Brenda Ceaser
Wendy Cellik
Tom Celuszak
Sandra Chamberlain-Snider
Jeffrey Chambers
Michelle Chambers
Ron Chambers
Ana Chamgoulova
Jessica Champagne
Irene Chan
Al Chance
Shreynesh Chandra
Al Chang
Edward Chapin
Andrea Chapman
Cindy Chapman
Don Chapman
Warren Chapman
Luke Charie
Penny Charlebois
Dave Charles
C Adam Chateauvert
Rand Chatterjee
Cedric Chauve
Bob Chaytor
Al Chen
Jiahua Chen
Roger Chen
Tao Chen
Christephen Cheng
Lyndsay Cheng
Emil Cherkezov
Peter Cherniavsky
Chris Cheshire
Carol & Leonard Cheveldave
Rob Cheyne
Jeff Childs
Ross Chilton
Fred Chin
Susan Chinnery
Dawn Chisholm
Peter Chisholm
Lisa Chiu
Ha Duck Cho
Kathryn Cholette
Robert Chomiak
Kingsley Chong
Jim Chorney
Joel Choy
Lorenz Christensen
Suzanne Christensen
Suzanne Christensen
Walter Christensen
Paul Christian
Jyoti Christiansen
Kim Christie
Leigh Christie
Leah Christmas
Kurt Chritopherson
Bill Chu
Timothy Chu
Egan Chung
Neil Chung
Marl Churchill
David Chutter
Mark Ciccone
Connie Cirkony
Melanie Clare
Corinna Clark
David Clark
Gordon Clark
Norman Clark
Connie Clarke
Dave Clarke
Doreen Clarke
Elise Clarke
Laurel Clarke
Laurie Clarke
Reed Clarke
Heather Clarry
Robyn Clarworthy
Barbara Clausen
Peter Clement
William Clendinning
Ben Clermont
David Cleveland
Gordon Clissold
Brian Cloke
Vincent Cloutier
David Clutton
Barbara Coad
Jane Coady
Alison Coates
Chris Cochlan
Kathleen Cochlan
Alice Margaret Cochrane
Steve Cochrane
Warren Cocking
Jen Cody
Fernando Coelho
Jessamyn Coffey
Susana Cogan
Alice Cohen
David Cohen
Elliott/Hilary Cohen
Christina Cole
Isobel Cole
Stuart Cole
Brennan Colebank
Graham Coleman
Grant Coleman
Kelsey Coleman
Ariane Colenbrander
Mary Coll
Anthony Collett
Brian Collier
Michael Collinge
Bryan Collins
Deborah Comaniuk
Frank Conci Jr
Russ Congdon
David Conn
Heather Conn
Tamara Connell

Tom Connolly
Patrick Conroy
Sharie Conroy
Jan Constantinescu
Elizabeth Conway
Gerald Conway
B Cook
Caroline Cook
Christina Cook
Nicole Cook
Amy Cooke
Luralie Cooksley
Steve Cooley
Mary Cooney
Adam Cooper
Beau Cooper
Beverly Cooper
Beverly Cooper
Kevin Cooper
Nicola Cooper
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Darren Copley
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John Teichroeb
Celestine Teigen
Keith Teitge
Hakan Telenius
Elizabeth Templeman
Greg Tennier
Mckinney Terry
Kay Teschke
Liz Tevaarwerk
Max Thaysen
Ashton Thebault
Lisa Thebault
Cynthia Thom
Gordon Thom
Alexandra Thomas
Alison Thomas
Barry Thomas
Gael Thomas
Gerald Thomas
Helen Thomas
Karen Thomas
Ren Thomas
Alison Thompson
Anne Thompson
Jeff Thompson
Scott Thompson
Stanley J. Thompson Thompson
Tom Thompson
Boyd Thomson
Joe Thomson
Ken Thomson
Wendy Thomson
Gayle Thornbury
Linnaea Thornley
Michael Thornton
Cheryl Thorpe
Christine Thuring
Tim Thurston
James Tichenor
Amy Tiessen
Jay Timmerman
Tara Timmers
Leslie Timmins
Robin Tivy
Sebastien Tixier
Valentino Tjia
Joel Tkach
Iona To
Caroline Todd
Heather Todd
Peter Toft
John Togyi
Julie Toh
Deena Tokaryk
Fulton Tom
Bibiana Tomasic
Melodie Tomiyama
Gary Tomlinson
Desiree Tommasi
Nola Tonkin
J-M Toriel
Mia Torr
Jesse Tottle
Claude Toupin
Barb Towell
Jayde Tracey
Joseph Tramontin
Trinh Tran
Susan Trapp
Paulo Travassos
Linda Travers
Oliver Raymond Travers
Charles Tremewen
Marie Trepanier
Lori Tribe
David Trigg
Geoffrey Trotter
John Trotter
Katherine Trotter
Gillian Trumper
Bill Tubbs
Barry Tucker
Semiral Tuncer
Jennifer Turner
Joe Turner
Karl Turner
Valerie Sing Turner
Veronique Turner
Brian Tutty
Blair Tweten
Dawn Tyacke
John Tylee
Bryan Tyler
Nick Tyler
Arthur Tymos
Grant Tyndall
Rebecca Tyson
Marc Uchida
Monika Ullmann
Mary Ungerleider
Norman Unrau
Farzana Unwalla
Scott Uzelman
Paula Vaananen
Nathan Vadeboncoeur
John Vaillant
Gilles Vaissade
Jamie Vala
Sharlene Valera
Eugene Valeriote
William David Van Belle
Frederic Van Caenegem
Charles & Renée Van De Kamp
Ron Van Der Eerden
Ron Van Der Eerdn
Joshua Van Der Meer
Steven Van Der Minne
Jessica Van Der Veen
Eduardo Van Dijk
Ben Van Drimmelen
Johannes Van Kessel
Anneke Van Leeuwen
Ron Van Nieuwkuyk
Ben Van Noort
Nancy Van Veen
Adrian Van Wijk
Tony Van Wouw
Magda Van Zyl
Peter Van Zyl
Harry Vander Meulen
A.Brian Vandergugten
Kevin Vanderleek
Gerald Vanslyke
Maria Vantol
Tom Varjan
Catherine Varney
Jeff Vass
Ivan Vazquez Alatorre
Duane Veale
Marc Venot
Joanna Veraflores
Angela Verbrugge
Bill Verburgt
Theresa Verdiel

Celine Verdoucq
Karla Verschoor
Fred Vertone
Elizabeth Vibert
Ingrid Vick
Nandor Vida
N Villeneuve
Andy Vine
Harold Vine
Josh Vines
Derek Vink
Lee Vishloff
Rosalie Vlaar
Tim Vlaar
Robert E. Vockeroth
Michael Volansky
Bernardina Volman
Victor Von Maydell
Kris Von Schalburg
Cornelia Von Schellwitz
Janice Vosper
Doris Vretenar
Frances Vyse
Bernard Wacher
Colin Waddell
Lindsay Waddell
Cathie Waddington
Elizabeth Waddington
Mark Waddington
Sandra Waddle
David Wade
Philip Wadham
Jessica Wadsworth
Carol Wagner
Harry Wagner
Antje Wahl Wahl
Robert Waine
Cynthia Waiz
Sharon Waldman
Brandon Walker
Cliff Walker
Dave Walker
Dr. Lawrence J. Walker
John Walker
Paul Walker
Robert Walker
Tom Walker
Ron Walkley
Leona Wall
Nikolas Wall
Ian Wallace
Dennis Waller
Gordon Waller
Erin Wallich
John Walmsley
Michael Walsh
Mary Walter
Melissa Walter
Sylvia Walterhouse
Don Walters
Muriel Walton
Bessie Wapp
Gagandeep Waraichh
Rebecca Warburton
Walter Wardrop
Nolda Ware
Robert Ware
Craig Warkentin
Leanna Warman
Allan Warner
Gordon Warner
Henry Warner
Sally Warner
Glenn Warren
Jared Warren
Kyla Warren
Mya Warren
Orest Wasarab
Beverly W. Wasden
Lalit Wasdev
Kevin Washbrook
Alan Wass
Debbie Wastle
Atsushi Watase
Rick Waters
Salome Waters
Cher Watkins
David Watkins
John Watson
Marnie Watson
Thorpe Watson Ph.D.
Allan Watt
John Watts
Robert Paul Way
Dave Way, Bsc, Bed
Mark Weatherby
Alan Webb
Sarah Webb
Vera Webb
Ashley Webster
Glenys Webster
Jane Webster
Scott Webster
Chris Wedel
Gary Weeks
Lorrie Weiser
Craig Weiss
Leah Weiss
Herbert Welch
Jim Welch
Shelley Welch
Fred Wen
Deryk Wenaus
Juergen Wendland
Joan Wenman
Carol Wenzel
Joanne Wesley
Harold West
Darlene Westerman
Wendy Westermark
Bill West-Sells
Michele Westwood
Roberta Westwood
Jennifer Wetherow
Kim Wheeler
Paul Wheeler
Carl Whicher
Brad White
Bradley White
David White
Heather White
Helena E. White
Randall White
Richard White
Sid White
Paul Whitehead
Paul Whitehouse
M. J. Whitemarsh
Sanders Whiting
Frank Whitney
Andrew Whytock
Cameron Widen
Raymond Wiebe
Elisabeth Wiebel
Susan Wieczorek
Lore Wiener
Ed Wiens
Sean Wiens
Tim Wiens
Peter Wijtkamp
Elizabeth Wilcox
Gerhard Wild
Shoshanna Wiley
Sarah Wilkins
J S Wilkinson
Jean And Derek Wilkinson
Phil Wilkinson
Jane Williams
Loni Williams
Paul W Williams
Andrew Williamson
Brian Williamson
Eileen Williamson
Syd Willicome
Colin Willis
Jocelyn Willis
Darryl Willoughby
Alan Wilson
Allan Wilson
Amy Wilson
Barry Wilson
Bill Wilson
Carl Wilson
Charlie Wilson
Dan Wilson
Dan Wilson
Debra Wilson
Derek Wilson
Lucia Wilson
Robert Wilson
Robert & Shirley Wilson
Scott Wilson
Todd Wilson
Willard Wilton
Nick Wimpney
A Winckers
Todd Windley
Ryan Windsor
Nina Winham
Mark Winston
Jeff Wint
John Winter
Malcolm Winter
Lacey Winterton
Gerald Wirachowsky
Rober T Wise
Jennifer Wishinski
Debbie Witham
Denise Withers
Louise Witt
Glen Witter
Marguerite Witvoet
Phyllis Wiu
John Woakes
Dave Wodchis
Maggie Wojtarowicz
Michele Wolfe
Michael Wolinetz
Marlene Wollenberg
Karen Wonders
Andrew Wong
Angus Wong
Anny Wong
Cylia Wong
Elisa Wong
Florence Wong
Gordon Wong
Mathew Wong
Philip Wong
Wai King Wong
Calvin Woo
Angelique Wood
Brian Wood
Flora Wood

Kathleen Wood
M Wood
Ted Wood
Angela Woods
Colleen Woods
John Woods
Kip Woodward
Robin Woolmer
Nigel Wootton
Neil Worboys
Wayne Worden
John P. Worst
Karen Worthington
Michael Wortis
Philip Wouda
Denise Wrathall
Kellie Wray
Adrian Wright
Colleen Wright
John Wright
Nancy Wright
Ron Wright
Stewart Wright
Lisa Wrixon
Chris Wu
Erik Wyatt
J Wyatt
Bill Yager
Naomi Yamamoto
Rose Yan
Jack Yang
John Yano
Gil Yaron
Lewis Yaskow
Harry Yates
Oguz Yayan
Bonnie Yee
Teresa Yep
Beverly Yhap
Erin Yorke
Irene You
Benjamin Young
Craig Young
Dennis R Young
Julian Young
Petey Young
Quincy Young
Kimberly Younger
Doris Yu
Keven Yu
David Yuen
Stella Yuen
Corinne Yule
Michael A Yusko
Yvonne Zacharias
Megan Zanatta
Moreno Zanotto
Brad Zarikoff
Darren Zbitnew
Raymond Zervini
Jackie Zhuang
Alex Zimmerman
Rebecca Zimmerman
N. Jay Zimmermann
Roger Zimmermann
Jim Zinger
Matthew Zipchen
Annette Zolbrod
Christine Zoltok
Brett Zuehlke
Jeff Zukiwsky
Robert Zurrer

APPENDIX E: FLYER RESPONSES

David Abel
B W Achtner
Dianne Ackerman
Genevieve Adamek
Paul A. Adams
W Adams
Kevin Adamson
Judy Agnew
Allen Aicken
Rodger Aiers
Heather Aikenhead
Glan Aldridge
Irene Alexander
Wendy Alexander
Paul Alexandrescu
Steward & J. Allanach
Lois Allen
Nicole Allen
Heather Allison
Patricia Allison
M. Amey
D.B Anderson
Frances Anderson
Jennifer Anderson
R. J. Anderson
Theodore Andrew
SR Ruth Aney
W Antifaeff
Layli Antinuk
M. J. Apcar
Dennis Arbour
Glen Arendt
A.W. Argue
Rick Armishaw
Jorry Ash
Pat & Fred Ashbaugh
Ken Ausmus
Douglas Austen
S. Avril
Stephanie Axford
Juan Ayala
Bil Trimmeer Bahnsen
Rev. E Baird
H. J. Baker
Louella Baker
David Ball
Lori Ballan
Jeff Baltrus
John Bannister
June Banwell
Cecily Baptist
Anne Barker
Sally Barker
Kenneth Barkley
Michael Barkusky
Edward Barnes
Ernest T. Barnes
Gary W.H. Barnett
J. A. Barrett
Shelley Barrington
Lucy Bashford
Allan Bassett
Bart Batchelor
Olive & Trevor Batchelor
A.J Bath
R.A Baymes
Jonathan Bean
Michele Beaudry
Nyle Beck
Ryan Beckett
Clare Marie Belanger
Mike & Arlene Bell
Peter Bell
Brigitte Bellin
Jeff Bennett
L.K Bennett
Carol Benoit
Diane Benoit
Gerald W. Bentley
W Berg
Tony Berrymen
Cheryl Berto
Peter Beynon
Dali Bhandari
Pauline Bingham
Dorothy Binning
C Birch
Joan Birkett
Doris Birse
Shirley Blacey
Agnes Black
Lena Black
Dave Blagdon
Lynne Blair
Janet Blanchet
William & Vera Blazenko
C & C Blemcard
M. Blossom
Krys Bobinski
Kristine Boddy
Winifred Boedeker
F Boehm
Valerie Jeanne Boelhler
Florence Boer
Richard Boge
K. H. Bohl
Ray Bonenfant
Shirley & Meg Bonney
Elizabeth Bordeaux
Jaime Bordes
E Borek
Elizabeth Boshi
Philip Boulton
Heather Bow
Rev M K Bowden
Joanne Bower
W.K Bowman
Jeremy Braacx
Ray Bradbury
Barry Braden
Ron Bradshaw
George Brake
Harold C. Braker
Charles Douglas Bramhall
Doug Brandvold
Stuart Brannon
John-Mark Bredeson
Tim Breedveld
Bonito Breining
Sharon Brekke
Mike Brenkes
E. Brereton
A Breto
D Brewis
Harold A. Bridge
Alexander Briggs
Shirley Brightman
Bette Broome
M Brousseau
Daryl W. Brown
Elaine Brown
Ian Brown
Nathan & Jonessa Brown
Barrie & Joan Brundages
Teresa Bryant
C. E. Buha
C.E. Buhr
L. C. Buhr
Lise & Peter Buitendyk
Chris Bukowsky
Bonnie Bukwa
I. Bullett
J Burce
Heather Burles
J Burnett
Donald Burton
Jeff Burton
T.M. Burwer
Jackie Buston
Hubert Butcher
Jim & Lynne Butler
P. K. Butt
Julie Buxton
Gregory Byrne
Eric J. Bysouth
John & Susan Cabeldu
Elvira Caduff
Tony Cain
Barbara Cameron
Cran Campbell
David Campbell
G.A & I Campbell
Michelle Campbell
Marilyn Carlaw
Eve Carr
Murray Carter
D.J. Cartwright
Marco Cattalani
John Cawlin
Irene Chamberlain
Joseph Chan
Dr. Laura Chapman
Maureen Chapman
Leona Charleyboy
Richard Chase
Harlan Chew
John Chick
Jessica Chiles
Marilyn Chisholm
Dr. Dennis H. Chitty
Jean Choquette
Judy Chrastina
Jaia Christopher
Jim & Linda Chuch
Olive E. Clark
A Clarke
John Claus
Hollie Clausen
Norma Close
Michael & Mary Cocivera
Sherry Codere
Marie L. Coil
Jeannine Companion
John Constable
M. Cook
Cooke
Isabel Cooper
Ken & Nicola Cooper
Samuel M. Copley
Alfred Cordoni
Isabel Cordua
KIm Cormack
Alma Corman
E.M Coulter
Dorothy Couture
Helen Crerar

Daryl Cripps
Patrick Crofton
Darlene Cross
Dave Crossley
Victor Csendes
Margaret Cuiff
David & Audrey Cummings
D Curtin
Bruce Cutayne
Hanif Dada
H Dakmus
Dennis & Margaret Dale
Regina Dalton
Mary Danbrook
H Daniel
Gary Dare
D. Dave
Robert Davies
Glenna Davis
Sheila Davis
Verneta Davy
B Dawson
G. W. Dawson
Margaret Dawson
T Dawson
Marlene Day
Kathryn de Champlain
Justin de Freitas
J. de jong
Carine De Kock
Wendy Deakins
Shirley Dean
Charles & Anne Deboner
Monty Deeg
Margaret Deframe
Angela Deimling
Phyllis Dekkers
Donna DeLange
David deMontreal
Brittany Dennett
Sheila Dentoom
Greg Depaco
Fred Eric Derosa
Stacey Desaulnius
G Desmaukn
Frank Deyell
Jackie Dhut
Virginia Dick
J Dickinson
John Dickinson
Lindsay A Dickson
S. Diefenbach
R. C. Dilke
Will Dillabough
Lou Dionne
Sean & Joan Dirt
Harry Do Jong
Yvonne E. Dobson
Brian Dodds
Stella Dodge
Arthur Doerksen
K Doi
Heather Donaldson
Perry Doner
V. R. Dooley
Judy Dore
Lynn Dorling
Colleen Doty
J. D. Douglas
Linda Doumont
Colin Dover
Lois Downman
Patrick Doyle
Margaret Dragvik
John Dressler
Mark Drew
Roger Drew
Dr. Anne Drummond
John Drysdale
Nick Dudink
Nicole Duelli
Lindsay DuGas
Gretchen DuMailin
Wayne & Judy Dunsmuir
Leonard Durante
Leon Dutfield
Sam Dutton
I.V Dyck
Gail Dyer
Lorne Dyke
Liz Dyson
Gabrielle Eagles
Michel Eastman
George Easton
T Easton
Lee Ann Eden
Margaret Ediger
J.E Edwards
Chuck Eggert
Claudia Eichbauer
Jurgen Eichmann
Ann Einstein
Barb Elford
Mary Anne Ellens
Steve Emerson
Sandy Emmerson
Marty Enns
Elizabeth Eriksson
Karl Ernst
Jim Eshom
Odelle Evans
Ron Evans
Suzanne Evans
Wayne Evans
Wayne Everett
Monty Evin
Robert Ewing
W.H.D. Fairbank
Kathy Fairley
Suzanne Fairley
W. A. Falk
Lindsay Fane
Paul Faraone
Gillian Farnsworth
Veb Farr
Malcolm Farrow
Harriet Faulkner
Lianna L. Faust
David S. Fearon
I. Anne Fedora
Markus Felderer
Michael Feller
Bonnie Ferguson
W. J. Fernihough
June Ferris
Sebastian Fichtl
Ron & Lil Fierbach
Velislar Fingarski
Yolande Finley
James Fiom
Barbara Fisk
Don Fisk
Mary R. Fitz-James
Jean Fitzpatrick
Jenny Fjellgaard
Eric Flanagan
Alex Fleming
Betty Flowers
Lorraine Flynn
Kelsey Foote
Evelyne Forbes
Cathy Ford
Cynthia Foreman
Helen & John Forman
Mike Forman
Sylvia Formilleza
Norm Forshaw
Etheleen Forsyth
Tiffany Fox
Ruth Frackson
Jody Frame
H.D Freeston
Leona French
Terry French
Allen Friedrick
David Frier
Mary Frost
Shirley Fulla
Blair Fulton
Drew & Joanne Gailius
Glenn John Gairns
Marilyn Gallant
Calla Gallies
Paul B. Gamache
Nora Gambioli
Antonio Garcia
Veronique Gariot
Gerald Garnett
Jean Gartner
Janice Gatenby
Bernie Gaucher
Noreen Gaudet
Kathy Genier
Rebecca George
Ray Geyersels
Neil & Muriel Gibb
Ron Gibb
Lynn Gillon
Elizabeth Girard
Roger & Rolande Girouard
Edward J. Gisle
Karen Glesby
Ann Goddard
Sam Godfrey
John & Janice Goertz
Walter J. Goerzen
Fiona Gold
Peter Goldgruber
Leona & Dale Gom & Evoy
Karen Goodfellow
Peggy Goodfellow
Barry Gordon
V Gorick
Michelle Gorman
W Gotzy
D.C Gould
Veronique Goverde
Mary Gradnitzer
Emily Grady
Ben Graham
Bev Graham
Brenda Graham
Mark & Karen Graham
Richard Grainger
Alex & Lousise Grant
Linda Grant
Tod Grant
D. M. Gray
Phyllis Gray
Dan Greco
Blake H Green
Eliot Greenberg
Richard Gregory
Heather Gregson

Maureen Grenier
Jan Greystone
Cameron Grierson
Rhys Griffiths
Richard grimsdell
Paul Grinder
Jennie & Gerhard Gross
Sue Grout
G Growe
Michael Guard
Lena Haagerup
John R. Haavener
Leol Otto H. Hack
Hank & Eileen Hackett
Gertruda Hadwin
Rodney Y Haianaka
Dawn Haider
M. Haines
Vernon Halverson
Mary Hamill
Judy Hampton
Patricia Hannah
Brad & Cindy Hansen
J. R. Happer
Peter Harder
Laurence Hardy
Dave Harkley
D.S Harp
Gordon Harris
Jim Harris
Steven Harris
Bill &Terry Harrison
Emily Harrison
Nancy Harrison
Craig E. Harrold
Alex Hartford
Sonia Harvey
Yota Hatziantoniou
Chris & Jean Haugland
Howard Hawthorne
M Hays
Suzanne Hazlewood
B Head
Andrea Heal
Rolf Heiberg
Allen Heihrichs
Gordon Hemsworth
C.B Henderson
Paul Hendricks
J. Henley
Alexandra Henriques
Terry Henscaell
Elizabeth Heppner
Mary Hermann
Martina Herrick
Virginia Herring
Catherine L. Heureux
Jennifer Hewko
Stu Hicks
J. Hill
John Hill
Kathryn Hill
Jean E. Hilton
Jennifer Hindle
Kari Hipwell
Stephen J. Hives
Ilse Hoche
George Hodges
Mike Hofer
Melanie Hollands
Kathy Holley
Ruth Hollinger
Susan & Ross Holloway
Edwin Hollowink
Jack & Ann Holm
Ken & Donna Holm
Denise Holmen
Candace Holt
Geoffrey Homer
Leonard E. Hoon
Tom Hoover
Zoltan Horvath
C Hostland
Charles Hou
Gary & Carolyne Hoyenga
Barry & Valerie Huber
Colleen Hughes
Nora & Tim Hulstein
Marie Hunt
Elizabeth Hunter
Nancy Hunter
Ron Hunter
D.J Huntley
Natacha G. Hyde
Jessica Irving
John & Trudy Irving
Mary Isaacson
Albert Isaak
Stella Izatt
J Jackson
H & E jacobsen
Daniel Jacobson
Patricia Jacobson
Ulrich Jahnke
Peter James
Pamela Jamieson
Alice & Hudson Janisch
Cameron Jantzen
P. Janusson
Roseanne Janzen
T.J Jardine
Blank Jecminkora
Mark Jeffery
Jean Jenkins
Janet Jenkn
Barbara Jensen
Donna Jepson
Angie Jerillion
Kerri Job
Stan Joeppky
Joginder S. Johal
M. Johl
Janet John
David & Brenda Johns
Beverley Johnson
Doris Johnson
Fran Johnson
Joan Johnston
Kenneth Johnston
Edna Jones
Jannette Jones
Randy Jones
Antoinette Jonkes
Bryn Jonzon
Geraldine Jordan
Lorrain Jordan
Patrick Jordan
Art Joyce
Henry E. Justesen
Harjit Jutla
Eleanor Kallio
Pearl Kam
Rose Kamm
M Kapas
Anne Kaps
Virginia Karr
Glan Kask
Michelle Katko
Y M Kato
Gordon Keer
Don & Magda Keith
A.R Keller
Sarah Kendall
Pauline Kenneally
J. N. Kennedy
Robert Kennigton
Helen Kettle
Dianne Keuitl
Isobel Kiborn
Dave Killam
Patricia Killman
David King
Paulette Kirkwood
Dean Kirmylo
Carol & Steve Kiss
Coralie Kittle
K. L. Kivi
Ike & Darlene Klassen
la Verin Klassen
Allan & Ruth Klasten
Elena Klein
Sallee Kneller
R Kodak
Jean Konkle
Lenora Konopaki
Dick Kosick
Len Kosiec
John Kovacs
Ronny Krahn
Esther & Matt Krastel
J. Kroeker
Raiuer Krumsiek
Stephen Kuehnel
H. H. Kwong
Thurston Lacalli
Jafferali A. Ladak
Otto Ladiges
Allison Lafortune
Tina Lagrotteria
Luis Lam
Lamont
R Landahl
Margot Landels
Alex Lane
Glan & Shelley Langford
Le Larsen
Mitzi Larsen
Mary Laster
Andrew Laurenson
John Lavallee
Garth Lawrence
James Lawszus
D leClaire
Philip Lee
T. C. Lee
Carol & Barry Lees
Joanna Leeterc
Arlene Lehmann
Joan Leitch
Pat Leith
Robt. D LeMonicnan
Lorraine Leonard
Dale & Mary Leopkey
Dorothy Lequire
Mark W. Leslie
Carmen & Marco Leustean
L & C Levesque
J. Lightheart
Dario P. Lince
Harald Lincke
Carolyn Linder
Ralph Lindner
C. H. Lindsay
Michael, Erin, Dylan; Teresa

Link; Snider
R.J Litalien
Michael Little
Rhonda Little
Arlene Lizee
B Lobo
Andrew Lofstran
Pat Lomax
G Long
Marie Long
Catherine Loo
Brian Looper
Cathy Losee
Jon Losee
John Louie
Jack Louse
Paul Lowe
David Lowrie
Michaela Lucas
Rick & Tammy Lucking
G Ludvigsen
Elieen Luongo
Jason Lweko
Peter Lyall
John & Penny Lyle
Egil Lyngen
Phil Lyons
Patricia Lysyk
T Lyttle
Brenna Maag
J Maars
Bill MacDonald
Jon Macdonald
Myrtle Macdonald
N & L MacDonald
John Macfarlane
G Macintosh
David Mackay
Janet Mackenzie
M.J Mackenzie.
Brock Maclean
George MacLeod
Priscilla MacVeagh
Ian MacVicar
David Madeley
J. W. Madill
Noel Magtibay
J.F. Maher
J.M Malkin
Jogimder S. Mander
B. Jane E. Manning
Anne Manuy
Adolf Manz
T. Manzo
Wendy Margetts
Kevin Margrath
Capt John. T. Marsh
William Marsh
David Marshall
Jennifer Marstaeller
Eileen Martin
Gerry Martin
Patrick Martin
R Martin
Rob martin
Bruce Mason
Lilian Mast
Bettina Matekuhn
Kevin & Erin Matheny
Maureen Matheson
Darcy Mathews
Bruce & Ruth Mathewson
Trish Matson
Gail Mattuck
Cecilia Mavrow
Doug Maxfield
Jane Maxwell
Wendy Mayer
A. J. Maytum
Maureen McAleese
A K McAra
Dave & Debbie McBride
N McBurney
Janice A. McCann
Sharon McCann
Scott McCartney
Dan & Bonnie McClure
Sandy McCormick
Ed McCready
Dorothy McDonald
Margaret Mcdonald
Ann McDowell
Elizabeth McGeachy
Helen McInnes
Garfield McIntosh
Cathy McIvor
Kathleen McKay
Tom McKay
M. C. McKinnon
Stella McKone
H.D. McLellan
S. F. McLeod
James McMartin
R McMonagle
C. McNeil
Juliet V. McNeill
I.E McOuat
Catherine McPherson
Joyce McQuarrie
Denise McRae
Orville E. McTavish
Patricia Medows
Christine Meier
Gabriel Menard
Jamie Mendres
Gwen Meoun
Rosemarie Merriam
Kevin Merz
Alexis Meservia
John Mestres
D.W Metsalfe
Gillian P. Meyer
Ralph Michaud
J & S Michels
Doreen Micks
Robert Middlemoss
John Millar
D. Miller
Dana L. Miller
Olaf Miller
Ted Miller
Thea Miller
Hans Mindnich
David Ward Mitchell
Evan Mitchell
S Mitchell
A Mittelmeyer
Charles Mixon
Lis Moffatt
William Molner
A.R Monahan
Rick Monahan
Peter Monk
Leanda Monro
Mel Monsell
Lee Montgomery
Nicky Moody
E Moore
Irene Morck
Diana Morgan
John Morgan
Lyle Morin
Angie Morris
Aubrey N. & Hazel E. Morris
John Mortimer
Kyle Morton
Wendy Morton
Gerald Moth
Sergei Moukhine
W. R. & M. A. Mpbes
Arnold Muir
Donna Muir
T.D Mulholland
Betty Muller
Katherine munday
Laurie munnings
Karen Muntean
Patrick Murphy
Joanne Murray
Margaret Murray
G. Musselwhite
Ben & Colleen Mycroft
Merrill & Teresa Myers
Eric Myrholm
Sardar Nabi
Linda Narratil
R Nazarewich
Patrick Neill
David R. Neilson
Kris Nelson
R. Nelson
W Nemish
Diana-Lea Newsom
Marjorie W. Niblock
Ida Nicoletti
Sylvia Nielsen
Mary Nishi Lince
Dieter Nitsche
Jennifer Norn
Jim Northey
Clive Nylander
Laura D. Oakley
S. Oakley
Shirley Oakley
Jean Fraser O'Clery
Valerie Olafson
Allan Ole
Edward Olichny
E Sheryl Marie Olsen
Tamera Olsen
K Orchard
Lynda Osborne
Walter Osip
Victoria Otton
Anne Oxley
Penny Oyama
Shirley Oykes
Colleen Ozawu
Andrea Padovani
Kathy Pagdin
S. E. Page
Victor Pankew
Tobi Panter
Donald Panttila
Leonard Paranych
B Parfitt
Barbara Parker
Edith Parkyl
Doug Parton
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